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HISTORY OF METHODISM,

FROM ITS ORIGIN TO ITS HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY,
MDCCCXXXIX.

VOLUME II

THE HISTORY

OF THE

Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century,

CALLED

METHODISM,

CONSIDERED IN ITS DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONAL FORMS, AND ITS RELATIONS TO BRITISH AND AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM.

By ABEL STEVENS, LL.D.

VOLUME II.

From the Death of Whitefield to the Death of Wesley.

EIGHTEENTH THOUSAND.

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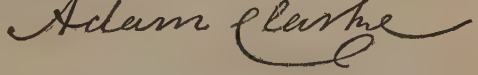

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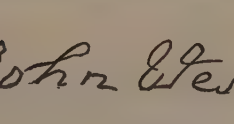

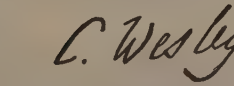

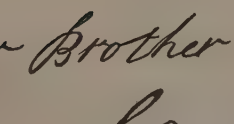

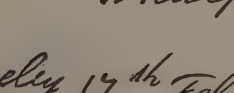

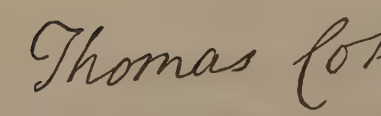

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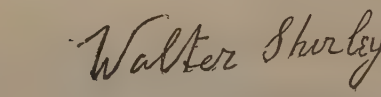

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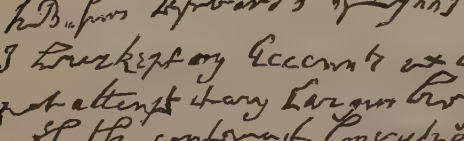
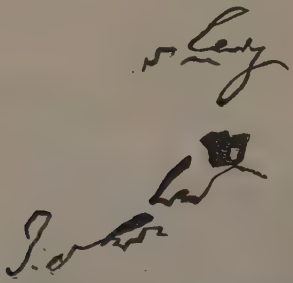


Wesley's last entry in his private Journal: "*N. B. For upwards of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly. I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can, and give all I can, that is, all I have. John Wesley. July* 16, 1790."



John Wesley's last Signature in the Journal of the Conference.

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HISTORY OF METHODISM.

BOOK V.

FROM THE DEATH OF WHITEFIELD TO THE DEATH OF WESLEY, 1770–1791.

CHAPTER I.

THE CALVINISTIC CONTROVERSY — SKETCHES OF SOME OF ITS WRITERS.

Calvinistic Methodism — Its Influence on the National Church and the Nonconformists — Different Mission of Arminian Methodism — The Champions of the new Controversy — Walter Shirley — His Sufferings for Methodism — Richard De Courcy — Whitefield's honorable Scar — Execution of the Earl of Ferrers — Illustrative Incidents — The Family of Hills, of Hawkestone — Rowland Hill — Sir Richard Hill — Jane Hill — Berridge — Rowland and Sir Richard Hill among the Kingswood Colliers — Characteristics of Rowland Hill — Toplady — The Calvinistic Controversy.

HITHERTO we have been able to trace the Methodist movement as a unit, with but occasional and salutary exceptions. But the time has now come for the line of division to be distinctly drawn.

The Calvinistic, or rather the Augustinian controversy, occasioned by the transference of dogmatic theology into the immeasurable and impracticable field of metaphysics, where the mightiest minds have delved for ages with hardly a single valuable result,[1] was again to agitate and finally to separate the new reformers.

[1] The greatest of metaphysicians admits that they have had no success, excepting himself, of course. Kant's Kritik, and Prolegomena zu jeder künftigen Metaphysik. Werke ii, 49, 50; iii, 166, 246.

The charitable student of their history will not fail, however, to recognize, amid their polemic strifes, that providential design which has thus far so marvelously marked their progress.

Calvinistic Methodism had well achieved its mission. It had resuscitated the Calvinistic Churches of the American colonies, and endued them with an evangelic energy which not only continues, but grows in our own day.[2] It was not desirable that it should add to their number by organizing itself among them as a separate body, identical with them in theology. Aided by an indirect but powerful influence from its Arminian colaborers, it had also revived, and thereby saved, the Calvinistic Nonconformity of England.[3] Its doctrinal peculiarities had attracted to it many kindred thinkers of the national Church—Venn, Romaine, Madan, Newton, Berridge, Conyers, Hervey, Toplady, the Hills, of Hawkestone, Townsend, Talbot, and a host of others. In connection with Wesleyan Methodism, it originated that evangelical or Low Church party in the Establishment, which was soon to be represented in Cambridge by Simeon, in Parliament by Wilberforce and Henry Thornton, in the missionary field by Henry Martyn; and by the co-operation of which Methodism was about to produce the noblest enterprises of English philanthropy: the British and Foreign Bible Society, first suggested by Charles, of Bala, the Welsh Methodist;[4] the Religious Tract Society, first exemplified by Wesley, and organized, at the suggestion of Burder,[5] by the co-operation of Rowland Hill, Matthew Wilks, and other Calvinistic Methodists; the London Missionary Society, which originated in an appeal from

[2] See vol. i, p. 477. [3] Isaac Taylor's Wesley and Methodism, p. 59.
[4] Quarterly Review, (London,) 1849, Art., Methodism in Wales.
[5] Watson's Wesley, chap. viii. Wesley and Coke really organized the first Tract Society in the Protestant world, in 1782, seventeen years before the "Religious Tract Society." See its plan of organization in the Arminian Magazine for 1784, reprinted in Wes. Mag., 1847, p. 269. Burder was a Tottenham Court convert. Life of Rowland Hill, by Wm. Jones, chap. 9. London. Jones's Jubilee Memorial of Rel. Tract Soc., chap. 2.

Melville Horne,[6] (who was for some years a Wesleyan preacher;) the Church Missionary Society, projected by the younger Venn; the Wesleyan Missionary Society, which arose from the labors of Dr. Coke, and which ranks in its finances and in the number of its foreign converts at the head of similar institutions in Protestant Christendom; the commencement of Religious Periodicals—successively the "Christian Magazine," "Spiritual Magazine," "Gospel Magazine,"[7] "Arminian Magazine," "Evangelical Magazine," and "Christian Observer;" the adoption of the Sunday School, promoted in his country societies by Wesley, introduced into the metropolis by Rowland Hill, and into America by Bishop Asbury;[8] Negro Emancipation; Exeter Hall; and the noble fame and nobler deeds of the "good men of Clapham."

The celebrated jurist, Blackstone, had the curiosity, early in the reign of George III., to go from church to church to hear every clergyman of note in London. He assures us that he heard not a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero; and that it would have been impossible for him to discover, from what he heard, whether the preacher was a follower of Confucius, of Mohammed, or of Christ.[9] Romaine had early held a special meeting, "a clergy's litany," to pray for the "peace of the Church, and for all orders and degrees of its ministers." He usually mentioned in his prayers on these occasions the names of all the evangelical clergy whom he knew. The whole number did not at first exceed eight; now they could be numbered by scores, and were continually increasing, and before his death he could count more than five hundred.[10]

[6] Ellis's History of London Miss. Society, p. 12. London, 1844.

[7] "These were the first religious journals published in England." Southey's Wesley, chap. 27.

[8] Jones's Life of Hill, chap. 9. Strickland's Life of Asbury, chap. 11. New York, 1859. It was suggested to Robert Raikes, by the wife of Rev. Samuel Bradburn, one of Wesley's most noted preachers, (Wes. Mag., 1834, p. 319.) She also assisted Raikes in its first organization.

[9] Article on Johnson in Christian Observer, (London,) 1858.

[10] Haweis's Life of Romaine, p. 32. Sidney's Life of Rowland Hill, ch. 1.

Unlike Arminian Methodism, Calvinistic Methodism had no peculiar features of doctrine or organization which need separate it from its Calvinistic associates among Nonconformists or Churchmen. Completing its peculiar mission to these, it was natural and proper that it should be merged in the evangelical Dissenting and Church bodies.

But the Methodist movement had a sublimer providential design than this temporary, though salutary agency. It was to be a perpetual witness for the revived evangelism, and to spread it over the world by its own direct instrumentality, as well as by healthful and continued provocatives to existing religious communions.

It needed but one representative or organic form for this purpose.

This providential designation had been growing more and more manifest, throughout the history of Arminian Methodism, by its superior organization and its peculiarities of both doctrine and discipline. And now, by the revival of the Calvinistic controversy, the two parties, thus far comparatively harmonious, were to be put asunder; the one to finish its work and be mostly absorbed, the other to become, not more isolated but more consolidated, and to spread its power over England and America; into France and Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway; to Africa, India, China, the islands of the Pacific and the South Sea; and to assume a form and energy of organization which seem to guarantee it a permanent, if not a general sway in the world.

Whitefield died in the autumn of 1770. The report of the controversy had not, it is probable, crossed the Atlantic to trouble the tranquil evening in which his sun went down with such undimmed brightness. He left behind him strong men, and as strong women, in the ranks of Calvinistic Methodism. Venn, Romaine, Berridge, Haweis, were yet prominent; as also the Countess of Huntingdon, Lady Anne Erskine, who was to be her successor, Lady Glenorchy, her most active female co-laborer, and many other "elect

ladies," whose zeal and munificence were for some time to extend its influence in the Establishment and out of it.

Men soon to become conspicuous, especially in the approaching controversy, had been recruited into its ranks during Whitefield's last sojourn in England. Among these were the Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley, grandson of Robert, first Earl of Ferrers. He was a first cousin of the Countess of Huntingdon.[11] Their families were connected in near degrees of affinity with the ancient royalty of England, both Saxon and Norman, with that of France, Denmark, Arragon, Castile, and the Roman empire, and, in fine, with most of the princely houses of Christendom;[12] honors, however, which will hereafter give them less importance than they derive from their connection with the religious movement of the eighteenth century called Methodism. Young Shirley's visits at Lady Huntingdon's London mansion brought him into intimate relations with the Methodistic leaders of the day. He attributed his spiritual conversion to Venn, and ever after delighted to acknowledge himself his "son in the Gospel." Being already in orders, he became one of Lady Huntingdon's chaplains, and entered courageously into the career which the great Methodists around him had opened.[13] His brethren of the regular clergy united immediately to exclude him from the metropolitan pulpits, and "though carefully conforming to established rules, and strictly regular, he became everywhere the object of reproach."

His curate in Ireland, De Courcy, also of an ancient and aristocratic family, was soon imbued with the same spirit, and suffered in like manner. While preaching in St. Andrew's, Dublin, he was expelled from the pulpit by order of the Metropolitan, for "the cry of Methodism had

[11] Archdeacon Hill's Letters and Memoirs of Dr. Walter Augustus Shirley, Bishop of Sodor and Man, chap. 1. London, 1849. The bishop was Shirley's grandson, and was a devout and able man. Watson, erroneously, calls Shirley Lady Huntingdon's "brother." Life of Wesley, chap. 11.

[12] Life etc. of Lady Huntingdon, vol. i, ch. 1. [13] Ib., vol. ii, ch. 34.

gone forth," and the unusual sight of crowds of the common people, eager to hear him, was witnessed at the old church. De Courcy withdrew, declaring he would preach in the open air. He mounted a tombstone in the church-yard, delivered his sermon, and thenceforward was known, with his zealous rector, as a Methodist; a devoted, eloquent, and useful one, though denounced by his clerical brethren, and refused license and priest's orders by his bishop. He hastened to London, where Whitefield exulted to receive him. At their first interview Whitefield, taking off his cap and bending downward, placed his hand "in a deep scar on his head," saying, "This, sir, I got in your country for preaching Christ." Whitefield had a right to boast of the Oxmantown Green exploit, the fiercest encounter with the mob in his history.[14] De Courcy never forgot the heroic allusion.

Shirley had an active intellect, a fervent heart, and an eloquent style. He went forth preaching, with power and great success, at Bath, Brighton, Norwich, and many places in Ireland. A terrible affliction brought him again to London, where he received the sympathies and formed the acquaintance of the Wesleys. His brother, the Earl of Ferrers, an infidel, a drunkard, and probably a lunatic, had murdered his steward for rendering assistance to his lady, who had been compassionately separated from him by an act of Parliament. The House of Lords condemned the wretched nobleman; he was to be executed and his body dissected. His brother and the Countess of Huntingdon, assisted by their Methodist associates, sought in vain to arouse him to a sense of the moral peril of his condition. They visited him and prayed with him in prison; and supplications were offered for him in many of the Methodist chapels. At the instance of Charles Wesley, then in London, he was remembered, not only in public assemblies, but at the sacramental table, and days of fasting and prayer were observed in his behalf. But he seemed incapable of reflecting upon his appalling fate. He

[14] See vol. i, p. 381.

spent the evenings of his imprisonment in playing at piquet; he demanded intoxicating drinks; the night before his execution he made one of his keepers read Hamlet while he was in bed, and half an hour before he was carried to the gallows he was employed in correcting verses which he had composed in the Tower. Dressed in his wedding clothes, decked with silver embroidery, he rode to the gallows in his carriage drawn by six horses, and accompanied by troops, and a hearse and six which was to convey his corpse to the Surgeons' Hall. He died without penitence, and apparently without fear.

From their religious interest for the condemned nobleman, and his connection with the Huntingdon and Shirley families, so prominently allied with them, the impression of this event upon the Methodist societies was general and profound. It affected the mind of Shirley deeply; he resumed his ministerial labors with augmented zeal, and the acquaintance which it had led him to form with the Wesleys lasted, with mutual cordiality, till it was interrupted, ten years afterward, by the Calvinistic controversy.

His preaching is described as richly evangelical, and as producing vivid effect. To awaken the common people was now his work, and he kept it in view "with singular steadiness during the whole of the stormy period in which he was called to exercise his ministry in Ireland." Notwithstanding his high social position, the hostility of his ecclesiastical superiors continued to embarrass him for years; but he met it with fortitude, and sometimes with a magnanimous defiance. Cope, Bishop of Clonfert, warned him to "lay aside his exceptionable doctrines," and threatened to "proceed in the most effectual manner" to suppress them. He answered promptly: "Menaces, my lord, between gentlemen, are illiberal; but when they cannot be put into execution they are contemptible!" He enumerated his doctrines, and showed that they were not exceptionable. He preached, he says, Justification by Faith alone, the Divinity of Christ, the Trinity, Regeneration, the "full assurance of faith as the

privilege of God's people, whereby they know that their sins are forgiven them for Christ's sake," and the necessity of good works as the fruits of faith. "These," he added, with a firmness which befitted both his religion and his rank, "these, my lord, are the doctrines which I must and will preach in defiance of the whole world!" He expressed himself, in conclusion, desirous of the friendship of the bishop, while his lordship's conduct toward him should be such as is "due to a gentleman and a minister of Christ; but," he adds, "I see no necessity for submitting to be trampled on by the first man in the kingdom."

A right manly soul had this evangelical nobleman, genuine Irish spirit, rendered the more self-respectful by his Methodism; and it is to be regretted that the paucity of our data respecting him will not allow us to give him more befitting space in our narrative. His archbishop, Ryder, of Tuam, knew how to respect him. His bishop, archdeacon, and curate would pick up scraps of his sermons, and go galloping over to the good archbishop with charges of heresy. "Let him alone," he replied to them; "let him alone; for if you bring him to trial he will appeal to the Articles and Homilies, and with these you can do nothing with him, so let him alone." The archbishop was a good enough theologian and Christian to know that Shirley's Methodism was true to the Church and the Gospel. He was somewhat of a humorist withal, and sometimes treated the charges alleged against the clerical Methodist in a manner the most effectual, perhaps, to correct them. Shirley's enemies annoyed the prelate with their frequent accusations. The curate of Loughrea was especially zealous against him, going often to Tuam with new specifications; but his grace perceived the design of this weak-headed backbiter, and effectually stopped him. He arrived once at Tuam with an air of great importance, and a certainty of ruining the intractable Methodist. "O your grace," exclaimed the curate, "I have such a circumstance to communicate to you, one that will astonish you!" "Indeed," replied the archbishop, "and what can it be?"

"Why, my lord," rejoined the curate with a solemn air, "he wears—white stockings!" "Very anti-clerical and very dreadful, indeed!" responded the prelate, with raised eyebrows. The curate was confident he had this time made an impression; he was at the "very pinnacle of self-gratulation." The archbishop, drawing his chair closer to the overweening informer, solemnly asked, "Does Mr. Shirley wear them over his boots?" "No, your grace," replied the mortified curate. "Well, sir," added the prelate, "the first time you find him with his stockings over his boots pray inform me, and I shall deal accordingly with him." His grace was a wise as well as a good man, and if the Establishment had been governed by more such, Methodism would have done much more good and much less evil.

Such are illustrations of the vexations, often degenerating into intolerable persecutions, which Methodists of even elevated rank had to endure from the Church in that day. Shirley, co-operating with Houghton, a Wesleyan preacher, one of the company "presented" with Charles Wesley, by the grand jury at Cork, to be transported as "vagabonds," preached with demonstration and power in Dublin. "You cannot imagine," wrote a correspondent of Lady Huntingdon, "what an uproar has been created" by his preaching. "But O!" added the letter, "what sermons he preached! The doctrine of the sinner's justification by faith alone, the sin and danger of neglecting the salvation of the Gospel, and the great duty of repentance, were enforced with an eloquence and zeal which cannot but mortify the pride and goad the enmity of those who have never tasted the grace of God in truth. This he is made to feel by rudeness and insult."[15] The Countess of Huntingdon, noticing his labors at Norwich, exclaims: "His ministry is so faithful, so vivid in its applications to the conscience, so earnest, so affectionate, so zealous, that many are born again, and will be his joy and crown in the great day! Blessed are the feet that carry the

[15] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, p. 184.

glorious light of the Gospel into the dark corners of the land! Blessed are the lips that proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to the poor, the wretched, and the vicious!" Such are a few glimpses of the character, trials, and labors of the Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley—illustrations of Methodism and its early times, and some of them grateful reliefs to the less agreeable scenes of the pending controversy, in which we are again to meet him.

Another distinguished family, bearing baronial honors, and dating from the times of Edward the First, afforded important men not only to the coming controversy, but to the interests of Methodism generally. It was famous, not merely for its long ancestry, but for its old English energy and good-humor, and its sturdy fidelity to the Protestant religion. It had given to London her first Protestant Lord Mayor. It afforded five gallant brothers for the field of Waterloo; and when one of them, elevated to the peerage, and afterward commander-in-chief of the British forces, was received, on his return from the wars, by the citizens of London, to be presented with a sword, another member of the family, a soldier in a better cause, was recognized at his side. "Here comes the good uncle!" shouted the multitude; "three cheers for him!" and the welkin rung with the proud shouts of the throng; for the veteran Methodist, Rowland Hill, was better known to the people of England, and is yet more familiar to the English world, than the hero, Lord Hill.

The Methodistic spirit of the day early penetrated the family at Hawkestone. Richard Hill, afterward Sir Richard Hill, long eminent for his Christian usefulness, devoted himself even to some of the "eccentric labors" of the great revival. In his youth he was subject to deep religious impressions; he traveled on the Continent, and endeavored to relieve them by dissipations, but returned more than ever convinced that genuine piety alone could satisfy his awakened conscience. Fletcher, of Madeley, was tutor to the sons of a neighboring branch of the family; young Hill made his case

known to the devoted Methodist in an anonymous letter, and requested an interview with him the same night, at an inn in Shrewsbury. Fletcher walked several miles to meet him, counseled and prayed with him, and thus guided his feet into the path of life. Not long afterward, while preparing for the Lord's Supper, his mind was "overpowered with an ecstatic joy in the Redeemer."[16] The ministry of Romaine, in London, confirmed him in his new faith, and thenceforward he was known as a zealous promoter of the Methodistic movement.

Rowland Hill, full of vigorous health and constitutional good-humor, was also religiously inclined from his youth. While at Eton and Cambridge, where he excelled in his studies, the letters of his brother continually fortified him in the faith. At the university, as we have seen,[17] he became the leader of an evangelical combination of students, which, allied to a similar company at Oxford, seemed about to reproduce the "Holy Club" that, under the Wesleys and Whitefield, had originated Methodism. The persecutions of the collegiate authorities, and the expulsion of most of the Methodist students, could not damp his ardor.

From the Methodistic correspondence of the times we catch occasional glimpses of a Christian maiden, who walked with God amid the beautiful scenery of Hawkestone.[18] Jane Hill strengthened the faith of her brothers by incessant letters. The extraordinary measures and consequent persecutions of Rowland, at Cambridge, alienated his parents; they deemed the family honor degraded, and for several years treated him with severity, limiting so much his financial allowance that during most of his early itinerant ministry he traveled on a Welsh pony, given him by a friend, hardly able to pay his expenses, and often knowing not in the morning where to

[16] Life of Sir Richard Hill, Bart., by Rev. E. Sidney. London, 1839.
[17] Vol. i, book iv, chap. 7.
[18] See Life of Sir Richard Hill, Life of Rowland Hill, and Life of Lady Glenorchy.

find a resting-place at night. "Cleave only the more closely to Jesus," wrote his faithful sister. His biographers speak with admiration of the gentle, but beneficent influence and meekness of her life, and say that to no one could be better applied the beautiful simile of Jeremy Taylor: "Like a fair taper when she shined to all the room, yet round about her own station she cast a shadow, and shined to everybody but herself." She encouraged him to seek the friendship of Lady Huntingdon, and to "stand faithful in the cause of his crucified Master, whether he should be admitted by the bishops as a minister of the Gospel to preach in his name or not."[19]

During Hill's trials at Cambridge, Berridge, of Everton, who in his wide itinerant circuits sometimes appeared there, amid assembled thousands, in the open field, sought his acquaintance and inspirited him for his work. They were congenial minds. Berridge's irrepressible humor, combined with heroic zeal and the truest piety, seemed a matured example of Hill's own eccentric but devout nature. A portrait remains of the aged vicar of Everton, with a huge wig and an indescribable countenance, in which humor and benevolence seem to contend for the master expression. He was one of the best Greek scholars of his age, and, of course, Aristophanes was his favorite author—that finest example of Attic style and worst example of Attic manners, which the good Byzantine bishop, Chrysostom, the Golden Mouthed, read on his couch at night, and placed under his pillow when he slept. Berridge's effigy would make an appropriate illustration for the pages of Aristophanes; no great compliment, indeed, but not the less true. He was, in fine, one of those examples of goodness and humor whose very defects please us, and whose infirmities are so much akin to virtues that we would not change them if we could. "I feel my heart go out to you while I am writing," he said to Hill, "and can embrace you as my second self. How soft and sweet are those silken cords which the Re-

[19] Life of Lady Glenorchy, p. 89.

deemer twines and ties about the hearts of his children. Go forth wherever you are invited into the devil's territories; carry the Redeemer's standard with you, and blow the Gospel trumpet boldly, fearing nothing but yourself. If you meet with success, as I trust you will, expect clamor and threats from the world, and a little venom now and then from the children. These bitter herbs make good sauce."

Six students of Oxford were expelled, as we have seen, for their Methodistic labors in private families and in the prison and poor-house of Oxford, and for their association with Venn, Newton, and Fletcher. Sir Richard Hill published his *Pietas Oxoniensis* and *Goliath Slain*, in their defense. A pamphlet war raged on both sides, and the religious community at large was stirred with excitement by the controversy.[20] Six bishops refused Hill ordination. He followed the advice of Berridge, and went forth, wherever the way opened, "into the devil's territories." He preached in prisons, in Dissenting chapels, and on the highways. He was often mobbed; saluted with the beating of pans and shovels, the blowing of horns and ringing of bells; pelted with dirt and eggs, and sometimes in peril of his life. He was once fired at, while in the pulpit, the ball passing over his head. His visits to the paternal home were rendered miserable by the opposition of his parents; but, consoled by his devoted sister, he ceased not to preach in all the vicinity; and her gentle influence and charities, aided by his labors and those of his brother, resulted in much local usefulness. Five of the family were soon united with them in the faith, besides some of the household servants and neighbors. In his old age, when his fame was in all the Churches, and

[20] Appleton's Encyclopedia of Biography, edited by Francis L. Hawks, D.D., says (Article, Rowland Hill) that Whitefield and Berridge were of the number of expelled students. Whitefield had been preaching in England and America for more than thirty years, and Berridge for about half that time. The American Methodist articles in this work (see Asbury and Coke) are fictions, and worse, they are caricatures, inserted apparently for a sectarian purpose. The well-deserved reputation of the publishers requires that they should have the book re-edited by more competent hands.

indeed in all the English world, he remarked, while walking on the terrace at Hawkestone, to a friend who had noticed the affectionate courtesies of the family toward him; "You see how I am now received here, but in my youth I have often paced this spot bitterly weeping; while by most of the inhabitants of yonder house I was considered as a disgace to my family. But," he added, while the tears fell down his aged cheeks, "it was for the cause of my God."[21] His brother, Sir Richard, though not contemplating holy orders, had sometimes labored as a lay preacher, or exhorter; but believing that as a layman he might be otherwise more useful, he yielded to the entreaties of his parents and abandoned such "irregularities." He was sent by his family to persuade his brother to follow his example. Arriving at Bristol, he was informed that Rowland had gone to Kingswood to preach to the colliers; there he discovered him standing up amid weeping thousands, upon whose blackened cheeks could be seen the traces of their flowing tears.[22] Rowland saw him in the crowd, and, suspecting his errand, preached with the greater energy and effect. Determined to defeat the design, he concluded by shouting, "My brother, Richard Hill, Esq., will preach here to-morrow." The young man did preach, and "instead of returning with his brother to Hawkestone, became his coadjutor in the very work he designed to persuade him to relinquish."

Bristol, Kingswood, Bath, the hills, woods, and vales of Gloucestershire, were the scenes of his addresses to many thousands, and his extraordinary character and talents soon began to secure general respect. In London he occupied Whitefield's pulpits at the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court, and the effect of his sermons there is said to have been "extraordinary in the extreme." Good Captain Joss received into the Tabernacle Church a hundred converts at one time, who had been awakened under Hill's sermons during a visit to the city. "Excepting my beloved and lamented Mr. Whitefield," wrote the Countess of Huntingdon, "I

[21] Jones's Rowland Hill, chap. 2. [22] Sidney's Rowland Hill, chap. 2.

never witnessed any person's preaching wherein there were such displays of the Divine glory and power as in Mr. Hill's."

Opposed by his family, and so poor that Lady Huntingdon and her friends had often to help him, he nevertheless kept the field courageously. He could not fail to be popular. His bearing was dignified and noble, his "voice excellent." Berridge says he had "the accent for a field preacher."[23] His preaching was often deeply pathetic, but there was also about it that rich and apt humor which always delights the populace, and which characterized so many early Methodist itinerants; a result perhaps as much of their hardy, healthful mode of life, their renconters with all kinds of men, and their unsophisticated habits, as of constitutional predisposition. Berridge delighted in Hill; Grimshaw would have pressed him to his heart; Whitefield could hardly write to him without a strain of "godly wit." Berridge was not afraid of the young preacher's humor; he had hope from that; but feared his discouragement, or his being "lifted up" by popularity. "Fear nothing but yourself," he wrote him incessantly; "study not to be a fine preacher; Jericho was blown down with rams' horns; look simply unto Jesus. . . . S. S. preached at my house during the holydays; he is a wonderful man indeed; somewhat lifted up at present, I think; but his Master will take him by the nose by and by. Make the best of your time, and while the Lord affords traveling health and strong lungs, blow your horn soundly."

Hill's humor was doubtless one of his most popular attractions, and he usually turned it to the best account. He had a remarkably expressive countenance. It is said that every emotion but fear could be indicated by it in an extra-

[23] The droll but pious vicar wrote to Lady Huntingdon: "I find you have got honest Rowland down to Bath: he is a pretty young spaniel, fit for land or water, and has a wonderful yelp. He forsakes father, and mother, and brethren, and gives up all for Jesus; and I believe will prove a useful laborer, if he keeps clear of petticoat snares. The Lord has owned him much at Cambridge and in the North, and I hope will own him more abundantly in the West." Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 30.

ordinary degree. His preaching was always direct and inartificial. Sheridan said: "I go to hear Rowland Hill, because his ideas come red hot from the heart." Milner, the noted Dean of Carlisle, was so affected under one of his discourses that he went to him, exclaiming: "Mr. Hill, Mr. Hill, I *felt* to-day; it is this slap-dash preaching, say what they will, that does all the good." Lady Huntingdon called him a "second Whitefield."

His humor doubtless went too far at times; it appeared impossible for him not to perceive the ludicrous side that even the gravest subjects may occasionally present. Lady Huntingdon was his venerated friend, but her active agency in the Methodistic revival seemed to him a sort of female episcopacy, and he failed not, in an unguarded moment of his early ministry, to play off his wit against her feminine apostleship. A woman can forgive any offense but ridicule. The countess heard of his remarks, and would never pardon them. He and his friends entreated her to receive him into her appointments, but she would not hear them. She wrote in reply to one of them: "Without reserve to you, my kind friend, and with every best wish to dear Mr. Venn, Mr. Hill *cannot* preach *for me*. This must not be pressed."[24] The countess was a saint, but she was also a woman. Hill was at this time in the zenith of his popularity; he honored her ladyship, and always afterward vindicated her extraordinary character; but having now no well defined relations to her or to Wesley, he projected a plan of independent labors.

After many episcopal repulses he received deacon's orders, but declined ordination as a priest, wishing larger liberty than the Church afforded. He addressed immense assemblies in St. George's Fields, London, and founded the noted Surrey Chapel, in the most depraved district of London, where for half a century he maintained his headquarters, preaching meanwhile in all parts of the United Kingdom, a chief leader in the Methodistic revival. He used the ritual of the national Church at Surrey Chapel, but the pulpit

[24] Life, etc., vol. ii, chap. 44. The italics are her own.

was open to all preachers of the Gospel of any sect or country.[25] During his long life no bishop of London was a more important or more useful man in the metropolis.

Augustus Montague Toplady "stands paramount," say his biographers, "in the plenitude of dignity above most of his contemporaries."[26] He was the staunchest Calvinistic writer of his day, and a preacher of rare eloquence. His sermons were extemporary, and delivered "in strains of unadulterated oratory." The variety of his talents was astonishing; his "voice was melodious;" his manner in the pulpit "singularly engaging and elegant;" no hearer's attention flagged during his discourses, and his sensibilities were so acute, that, weeping himself, his audience was often melted into tears. Suffering from pulmonary disease, he prostrated his health by prolonging his studies through most of the night. He sought improvement by removing from his parish in Devonshire to London, where he became associated in ministerial labors with Romaine, Venn, Shirley, Madan, and Hill. He heartily co-operated in the plans of Lady Huntingdon, and made ministerial excursions, with her and her preachers, into Wales and various parts of England. After extensive labors among the Calvinistic Methodists, (which were frequently repeated till his death,) he settled at last in the Orange-street Chapel, London, where we shall again meet him in the approaching controversy.

The news of Whitefield's death seemed only to give a new impulse to these brave and devoted men; but the unhappy, yet in many respects beneficial, controversy now suddenly burst upon them. They were to be its Calvinistic champions. Their share in the contest was, however, a comparatively slight fact in their Methodistic history; but as they became prominent about this time, they are here appropriately introduced into our narrative.

[25] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, *passim*. See also Sidney's Life of Rowland Hill. Three "Lives" of Hill have been published, each representing different party views of his times, and all susceptible of much amendment in this respect. They give the "Calvinistic controversy" with reprehensible partiality. [26] Southey's Wesley, vol. ii, chap. 25

CHAPTER II.

THE CONTROVERSY.

Wesley's Minute — Moral Tendency of Calvinism — Wesley's Orthodoxy — Benson dismissed from Trevecca — Fletcher resigns its Presidency — The Calvinistic "Circular" against the Minute — Scenes at the Conference of 1771 — "Declaration" of the Conference — Fletcher writes his Checks to Antinomianism — Shirley's Narrative — Ireland and Thornton — Fletcher proceeds with his Checks — Charles Wesley encourages him — Sir Richard and Rowland Hill, Walter Sellon, and Thomas Olivers enter into the Controversy — Sketch of Olivers "the Cobbler" — Toplady among the Combatants — The Controversy rages for six Years — Berridge, Hervey, and Madan — Bad Temper of the Writers — Fletcher's Christian Spirit — Value of his Writings — Their Historical Results — Fate of the Combatants — Rowland Hill — Sir Richard Hill — Fletcher at Stoke Newington — Fletcher and Venn in the Mansion of Ireland — An Impromptu Sacrament — Last Glimpse of Shirley — Death of Toplady — Conclusion of the Controversy.

Soon after the adjournment of Wesley's Conference of 1770 appeared the Minute on Calvinism, which provoked the new controversy. It declares:

"We said in 1744, 'We have leaned too much toward Calvinism.' Wherein?

"1. With regard to *man's faithfulness.* Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression, and we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on his authority, that if a man is not 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon,' God will not 'give him the true riches.'

"2. With regard to *working for life.* This also our Lord has expressly commanded us. '*Labor*, (Ergazesthe,) literally, '*work* for the meat that endureth to everlasting life.' And in fact every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for*, as well as *from* life.

"3. We have received it as a maxim, that 'a man is to do nothing *in order to* justification.' Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favor with God should

'cease from evil, and learn to do well.' Whoever repents, should do 'works meet for repentance.' And if this is not *in order to* find favor, what does he do them for?

"Review the whole affair.

"1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God? He that now believes in Christ, with a loving, obedient heart.

"2. But who among those who never heard of Christ? He that feareth God, and worketh righteousness according to the light he has.

"3. Is this the same with 'he that is sincere?' Nearly, if not quite.

"4. Is not this 'salvation by works?' Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition.*

"5. What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years? I am afraid, *about words.*

"6. As to *merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid: we are rewarded *according to our works*, yea, *because of our works.* How does this differ from, *for the sake of our works?* And how differs this from *secundum merita operum*, 'as our works deserve?' Can you split this hair? I doubt, I cannot.

"7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those who, by their own confession, 'neither feared God nor wrought righteousness.' Is this an exception to the general rule? It is a doubt whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did 'fear God and work righteousness?' His own saying so is not proof: for we know how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect.

"8. Does not talking of a justified or sanctified *state* tend to mislead men? almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, *according to our works:* according to the whole of our inward tempers and our outward behaviour."[1]

[1] Minutes of the Methodist Conferences from the first held in London.

This document is expressed with Wesley's usual brevity. It is an enumeration of succinct propositions, not designed for popular use, but for his preachers, who were not unaccustomed to theological studies, and who had heard his discussion of its theses in the Conference. Detached propositions were liable to abuse; the Minute, as a whole, might have been better guarded, and doubtless would have been, had Wesley apprehended that it was to be so extensively and polemically discussed.

Its doctrine, as obviously intended, is wholesome and Scriptural.

Calvinism itself had generally maintained with rigor the obligations of morality and Christian "works;" though contrary, as Wesley believed, to its logical consequences. It is its just boast that, wherever it has swayed a national influence, it has vindicated the morals of Christianity and the rights of man. Switzerland, Scotland, the English "Commonwealth," and Puritan New England, are historical examples. Whether this effect has proceeded indirectly from its severe, its alleged gloomy influence on the popular temper, and by consequence on the popular morals, or from its theological theory; and whether the more intimate influence of the latter, in seasons of religious awakening and inquiry, tends morally and logically to Antinomianism, need not here be discussed; it is sufficient to say that such had been its effect in the Methodistic revival. Wesley had to combat this Antinomian tendency continually; it embarrassed his itinerants throughout the country; some of his own preachers had themselves fallen into the perilous error;[2] it prevailed among the Moravians, and the sturdiest energy and sense of good John Nelson were tasked to save the societies of Yorkshire from its influence. Wesley had guarded solicitously against it from the outset of his career; he preached against it, as

by the late Rev. John Wesley, A.M., vol. i, p. 96. London: 1812. Fletcher's Works, vol. i, p. 8. Amer. edit. Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 39.

[2] Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 23. Watson's Wesley, chap. 11.

we have seen, while yet at Oxford, and in the Minutes of his first Conference he asserted, "We have leaned," in this respect, "too much toward Calvinism." This declaration, now reproduced, was doubtless the obnoxious phrase in the Minute, and led to the misinterpretation of the rest of the document.

Arminian Methodism had been spontaneously taking, under the able administration of Wesley, an organized and a powerful form. Calvinistic Methodism, though still mighty in its moral influence, had no such commanding attitude, or prospect of permanence; the very organic growth of the one tended to its isolation from the other, notwithstanding their virtual co-operation. It was natural that, in such circumstances, the Calvinistic leaders should feel some jealousy of the influence of the Wesleyan party, especially in respect to doctrinal questions for which the Calvinistic evangelists cherished an ardent interest, an interest which, it may be gratefully acknowledged, partook more of zeal than of bigotry. Wesley perceived this jealousy, and, with less occasion for it, nevertheless reciprocated it.[3]

The Calvinistic Methodists had been familiar with Wesley and his writings for more than thirty years; no one, knowing his sentiments, could, without a party bias, have questioned his orthodoxy on the great doctrine of the Reformation, Justification by Faith. In less than three months after the publication of this Minute, he preached the Funeral Sermon of the great chief of Calvinistic Methodism, Whitefield, in the chapels of Lady Huntingdon, in London and elsewhere, and never had he more fervently set forth that doctrine than on these crowded occasions.[4] Extraordinary

[3] See his Letter to Fletcher, Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, p. 233; also the Countess's Letter, p. 235.

[4] He said: "With this point he (Whitefield) and his friends at Oxford, the original Methodists so called, set out. Their grand principle was, there is *no power* by nature, and *no merit* in man. They insisted that all power to think, speak, or act aright, is in and from the Spirit of Christ; and all merit is (not in man, how high soever in grace, but merely) in the blood of Christ. So he and they taught: there is no power in man, till it is

then must it seem to impartial readers in our day, that from this brief document should ensue, after such antecedents, a violent controversy of six years' continuance. The Church may at least learn from such facts an admonitory lesson; in this instance it may learn more—that the wisdom of God can overrule even the errors of good men for the promotion of his cause.

The Countess of Huntingdon, with exaggerated alarm, "apprehended that the fundamental truths of the Gospel were struck at" in the Minute.[5]

Wesley, "having for several years been convinced that he had not done his duty to that valuable woman," and believing that she and her associates "were jealous of their authority," sent her an admonitory letter, telling "her all

given him from above, to do one good work, to speak one good word, or to form one good desire. For it is not enough to say all men are *sick of sin:* no, we are all 'DEAD in trespasses and sins.' . . . And we are all helpless, both with regard to the power and to the guilt of sin. For 'who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' None less than the Almighty. Who can raise those that are *dead* spiritually, dead in sin? None but he who raised us from the dust of the earth. But on what consideration will he do this? 'Not for works of righteousness that we have done.' 'The dead cannot praise thee, O Lord;' nor do any thing for the sake of which they should be raised to life. Whatever therefore God does, he does it merely for the sake of his well beloved Son. . . . Here then is the sole meritorious cause of every blessing we do or can enjoy; in particular of our pardon and acceptance with God, of our full and free justification. But by what means do we become interested in what Christ has done and suffered? 'Not by works, lest any man should boast;' but by faith alone. 'We conclude,' says the apostle, 'that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law.' And 'to as many as [thus] receive him, giveth he power to become the sons of God, even to those that believe in his name: who are born, not of the will of man but of God.' And 'except a man be [thus] born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' But all who are thus 'born of the Spirit,' have 'the kingdom of God with them.' . . . His indwelling Spirit makes them both holy in heart, and 'holy in all manner of conversation.' But still, seeing all this is a free gift, through the righteousness and blood of Christ, there is eternally the same reason to remember, 'he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.'" Wesley's Works, vol. i, Sermon 53. It is very appropriately placed in juxtaposition with his celebrated Anti-Calvinistic discourse on Free Grace.

[5] Life and Times, vol. ii, chap. 39.

that was in his heart" respecting her faults. If it were ever needed, it was now unseasonable, and could hardly fail to be unfavorably interpreted. It only exasperated the doctrinal offense.

The ardent Shirley opposed the Minute, and deemed "peace in such a case a shameful indolence, and silence no less than treachery." The countess declared that whoever did not wholly disavow it should leave her college at Trevecca, notwitstanding dogmatic opinions had never been made a condition of admission there, and Arminians, Calvinists, and Universalists were represented among her teachers, the Arminians predominating in the faculty. Fletcher, its president, who alone, of either party, seemed competent, in his saintly "meekness of wisdom," to enter into the controversy without prejudice, was absent; Benson, the Arminian head-master, defended the Minute, and was dismissed. Benson's dismissal deeply affected Fletcher. He wrote to the countess that "Mr. Benson made a very just defense when he said, he did hold with me the possibility of salvation for all men; that mercy is offered to all, and yet may be received or rejected. If this be what your ladyship calls Mr. Wesley's opinion, free-will, Arminianism, and if every Arminian must quit the college, I am actually discharged also. For, in my present view of things, I must hold that sentiment, if I believe that the Bible is true, and that God is love." To Benson he also wrote: "If the college be overthrown, I have nothing more to say to it: the confined tool of any one party I never was, and never will be. Take care, my dear sir, not to make matters worse than they are; and cast the mantel of forgiving love over circumstances that might injure the cause of God, so far as it is put into the hands of that eminent lady, who hath so well deserved of the Church of Christ."[6] Fletcher visited the college, preached with much dejection, and took his final leave; his resignation being promptly accepted by the countess.

[6] Life of Benson, by Treffry, chap. ii.

The troubled elements could not now be allayed. Wesley sent to the countess a letter, June 19, 1771, arguing against her misconstruction of the Minute, referring to his sermons on "Salvation by Faith," published thirty-two years before, and on "The Lord our Righteousness," issued a few years later, and to his funeral discourse on Whitefield, printed within a few months, as proofs of his orthodoxy; declaring that for thirty years it had been the same and unquestioned, and concluding with assurances of affectionate regard and most catholic sentiments.[7] The countess would not relent. She issued a remarkable Circular, signed by Shirley and others, inviting all clergymen and laymen, of whatever denomination, who shared her opinions respecting the Minute, to meet in Bristol during the session of Wesley's next Conference there, and to "go in a body to the said Conference, and insist upon a formal recantation of the said Minute." If the "dreadful heresy" should not be recanted, they proposed to sign and publish a Protest against it. A copy of the Minute was inclosed, as also the form of Protest, and the assurance was given that "lodgings would be provided" for the protesting visitors.[8]

Wesley was not alarmed, nor deterred a moment from his usual labors, by the threatened storm. While pursuing his work in Ireland he printed, July 10, 1771, a Defense of the Minute, for private circulation among his preachers, to prepare them for the approaching Conference.[9] Zealous for what they deemed the truth, these devout Calvinists, though accustomed, as many of them had been, to the highest courtesies of life, perceived not the egregious impropriety of their proposed interference with Wesley's Conference—a private session of preachers which never had sat, and does not yet sit, with open doors. They believed "that as all under the name of Methodists may and are too generally supposed to

[7] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 39.

[8] See the "Circular" in Fletcher's Works, vol. i, p. 7, and the form of Protest in Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 39.

[9] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i, p. 394. London, 1857.

hold principles essentially the same," they had a right to make thus formally their protest. Wesley perceived the absurdity of the proposed course and remonstrated against it. The countess saw it also, but at too late a moment to retrace her steps. The evening before the Conference she wrote to him, in order to "soften or remove his objections;" she acknowledged that the "circular was too hastily drawn up," and recanted it, hoping her example would lead to the "recantation of the Minute." "As Christians," she remarked, "we wish to retract what a more deliberate consideration might have prevented." Wesley, deeming the retraction too late, and knowing, perhaps, that the circular had failed to bring together more than eight persons, and few of these from beyond the city,[10] returned no answer. Shirley himself, on arriving at Bristol to lead the protesting "body," seems to have discovered the awkwardness of his position, and, on the morning of the Conference, wrote to Wesley and his preachers, "regretting that offense should have been given by the mode of the circular," and requesting to know by what other course the protesting brethren might communicate with them. Wesley sent only an oral answer, intimating that Shirley and his associates would be received on Thursday, the third day of the session, and thereby implying that their intrusive visit should be allowed only at his own discretion. Shirley, with three preachers of the countess, two laymen, and two students of the Trevecca College, composed the protesting company. Berridge, Venn, Romaine, Madan, all the prominent Calvinistic preachers, in fine, maintained a dignified reserve. The scene was little short of ridiculous.

The Conference was unusually large, for Wesley's preachers had resorted to Bristol with eager expectations. At the introduction of the company prayer was offered by Wesley; the apologetic letters of the countess and Shirley were then

[10] Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 23. The countess wrote to Thornton complaining of "the falling off of those who had promised her support." "Four only," she states, "act with calmness and firmness in co-operation with me." Life and Times, vol. ii, chap. 39.

read, and the latter expressed the "hope that the submission made was satisfactory to the gentlemen of the Conference." This was admitted; but then it was urged that as the offense given by the circular had been very public, so ought to be the letter of submission.[11] The Conference was not inclined to be uncharitable, but it was quite right that it should maintain its self-respect in such peculiar circumstances, and Shirley promptly consented to have the letters published.

Wesley met the case with his usual self-possession and dignity. He rose and addressed the Conference, remarking that for more than thirty years he had preached daily the doctrine which he was now accused of denying; no man in England had preached it more extensively, or written it more explicitly; the Minute did not deny it; and if that document were even ambiguous, yet men of candor should interpret it by his well-known antecedents. He suspected personal hostility toward him, and deemed that this was the origin, however unconsciously, of the opposition to the Minute. Shirley warmly protested his good-will toward Wesley, and that he opposed only what he deemed the dangerous tendency of the Minute, and "entreated them, for the Lord's sake, that they would go so far as they could, with a good conscience, in giving the world satisfaction," by a suitable explanation. To this proposal Wesley and his brethren could not, of course, object. They could explain without denying their opinions. They even gave Shirley the privilege of drawing up the proposed document.[12] Wesley drew his pen over a few words, and, with fifty-three of his preachers, cordially signed it.

[11] A Narrative of the Principal Circumstances relative to the Rev. Mr. Wesley's late Conference at Bristol, August 6, 1771, at which the Rev. Mr. Shirley and others, his friends, were present; with the Declaration then agreed to by Mr. Wesley and fifty-three of the Preachers in connection with him. By the Rev. Mr. Shirley. Bath, 1771.

[12] The author of Lady Huntingdon's Life and Times says that Wesley wrote it; but that mongrel yet important publication cannot be relied on in anything relating to disputes between the Arminians and Calvinists. Vol. ii, chap. 39; Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 23; see also Shirley's Narrative.

But two refused to give it their signatures, questioning its propriety after what had occurred, and doubting the use that would be made of it. The sturdy John Nelson's name is not upon it; he had "felt an old man's bone within him," under the abuse of the young corporal at York, and, if he was present at this Conference, he loved Wesley too much and was too thoroughly an English gentleman not to resent somewhat these extraordinary misconstructions and annoyances. Thomas Olivers stoutly resisted the Declaration; he rebuked, with unnecessary defiance, the conduct of the Calvinists, and thought that the explanation was liable to an unfavorable doctrinal interpretation. Fletcher, to whom the proceedings were reported, and whose Christian tenderness nothing could annoy, wrote afterward of Shirley's conduct on the occasion as "like that of a minister of the Prince of Peace, and a meek, humble, loving brother in the Gospel of Christ."

The Declaration affirms that "Whereas the doctrinal points in the Minutes of a Conference held in London, August 7, 1770, have been understood to favor justification by works, now we, the Rev. John Wesley, and others assembled in Conference, do declare that we had no such meaning, and that we abhor the doctrine of justification by works as a most perilous and abominable doctrine. And as the said Minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare, in the sight of God, that we have no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for justification or salvation, either in life, death, or the day of judgment. And though no one is a real Christian believer (and consequently cannot be saved) who doth not good works when there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our justification, from first to last, either in whole or in part."[13]

After it was signed, Shirley was startled with the unexpected demand that, as he had now the pledge of Wesley

[13] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 39.

and the Conference respecting their meaning in the Minute, he should, on his part, make some public acknowledgment that he had mistaken its design. He hesitated, but when one of the lay preachers rose and significantly asked him if he doubted the honesty of John Wesley, he yielded, and subsequently wrote the avowal that he "was convinced he had mistaken the meaning of the doctrinal points" in the Minute. The interview was concluded with prayer, and the warm-hearted Irishman retired, congratulating himself that, "for his own part, he was perfectly sincere, and thought it one of the happiest and most honorable days of his life."[14]

From these scenes, more amusing perhaps than offensive, was now to arise a controversy, fierce and prolonged in its contest, and grand, even, in its consequences. It was to give a permanent character to the theology of Methodism; a resurrection to the faith which the Synod of Dort had proscribed; greater prominence to the doctrines of Arminius and Grotius than all their continental champions had secured for them; to spread evangelical Arminianism over England, over all the Protestant portion of the New World, and more or less around the whole world; to modify, to mollify, it may rather be said, the theological tone of evangelical Christendom, and probably of all coming time.

Its historical importance justifies a fuller account of it than has usually been given by writers of either party.

The pious vicar of Madeley, who, with declining health, had been pursuing, in his "beloved solitude," as he calls it, his divine studies and useful labors, had received the circular with painful surprise, and also a request from Wesley to defend his Minute. He prepared his Five Letters to Shirley; the first of his noted "Checks to Antinomianism." They had been sent to Wesley, and were actually in print, at Bristol, during the Conference. They were now published.

Unnecessary pains have been taken by Wesleyan writers to vindicate Wesley from reproach, for allowing the contro-

[14] Shirley's Narrative, p. 17.

versy to be continued after the reconciliation of the parties at the Conference. But the design of the original Minute, the suppression of Antinomianism, was still as relevant as before. Fletcher himself speaks of "the almost general Antinomianism of our congregations."[15] "If the Lord does not put a stop to this growing evil," he says, "we shall soon see everywhere, what we see in too many places, self-conceited, unhumbled men rising against the truths and ministers of God." "We stand now as much in need of a reformation from Antinomianism as our ancestors did of a reformation from Popery."[16]

Wesley had not recanted the Minute, but explained it; and now, from the liability of a misconstruction of his conciliatory course, and the prevalence of the evil against which his protest had been directed, it was more than ever both just and necessary that he should vindicate and enforce it, not in contradiction of, but in accordance with, the explanatory Declaration.[17]

Fletcher, who was not at the Conference, wrote, on hearing of the reconciliation, to his friend Ireland, a wealthy

[15] Second Check. Works, vol. i, p. 107.

[16] Third Check. Ibid., p. 135.

[17] The author of the Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon (vol. ii, chap. 39) represents the Declaration as a "recantation," but I am reluctantly constrained to warn the reader, that nearly the whole account which that writer gives of the controversy is a caricature, as much so as the portrait of Wesley which disfigures his second volume. To represent the Declaration as a "recantation" of the Minute is not only contrary to the obvious sense of the former, but an impeachment of Shirley, who himself *recanted* his construction of the Minute, declaring that he "had mistaken" its meaning. See his acknowledgement, as also a very just view of the entire controversy, in Jackson's Charles Wesley, (vol. ii, chap. 23.) Jackson says: "To make an impression upon the public mind injurious to Mr. Wesley, great prominence was given to this subject in the advertisement of Lady Huntingdon's Life, which was said to contain, among other things of great importance, a document of intense interest, in which Mr. Wesley and his preachers retracted their own doctrines. The trick was despicable. The document which was represented as such a curiosity had been before the world nearly seventy years! It was published both by Mr. Wesley and Mr. Shirley; and was well known to exist in Watson's Life of Mr. Wesley, a work to which Lady Huntingdon's biographer distinctly refers, and where he must have seen it."

merchant of Bristol, to forestall the publication of his "Letters." Ireland was a Calvinistic Methodist, and had signed the circular, but he was a cordial friend of both parties. With Thornton, of London, a like-minded layman,[18] he labored subsequently for the restoration of harmony between them; and his opulent country seat, near Bristol, was their common home, and the scene of many agreeable reunions among them at a later day. Fletcher did not consider his pamphlet irrelevant to the present state of the controversy; but as it was addressed to Shirley, and contained many personal references to his position, and to opinions published by him some ten years before, in a volume of sermons, his charitable spirit shrunk from any possible irritation which the publication might give to the allayed dispute. His letter, however, arrived too late. Wesley, as usual, had hastened from the Conference to his itinerant labors, and as the work was in print, he had left orders with his head printer to issue it. He had also commissioned Thomas Olivers to see it distributed. Ireland took the letter to the printer, and also to the stewards of the Methodist society in Bristol, but in vain; Olivers, who had honestly, though obstinately, resisted the Declaration in the Conference, against the example of Wesley, Benson, and his other associates, now as steadfastly persisted in the publication of the Check.

Fletcher's pamphlet produced an immediate sensation. Highly as he had been esteemed as a preacher, he was now seen to be superior as a writer. His command of the English language had seldom been equaled by a foreigner; his style was not only accurate but eloquent; his lucid argument, his extraordinary illustrative aptness, and, above all, his Christian benignity, surprised and delighted impartial readers. The publication could not fail, however, to affect Shirley and his immediate friends unfavorably. He

[18] John Thornton, Esq., "a great friend," wrote Fetcher, "to a catholic Gospel. If clergymen are backward to promote peace, the God of peace may provoke them to jealousy, by raising from among the laity such instruments of reconciliation as will be a terror to bigotry, and an example of universal love." Benson's Life of Fletcher, chap. vi, p. 180.

wrote to Fletcher stating his intention to publish a Narrative of the facts of the controversy, including letters of Fletcher to Ireland against the issuing of the Check. Fletcher, not with defiance, but with the tenderest personal affection, gave him permission to publish the letters. "They show," he wrote, "my peculiar love and respect for you, which I shall at all times think an honor, and at this juncture shall feel a pleasure in seeing proclaimed to the world." If the Narrative should be friendly, he adds, and printed in the same form as his Check, he would purchase copies to the value of ten pounds, and binding them with his own pamphlet, circulate them gratuitously, to show that they "made a loving war." Shirley's narrative was published; it gave the Declaration of the Conference, but with an important phrase, in the last line, so changed as to read "our *salvation*," instead of "our justification,"[19] a modification of the sense of the document which readers of the later Checks of Fletcher must perceive to be of no small importance in the controversy. It was doubtless an accidental error; Shirley was incapable of fraudulently making it. The passages from the letters of Fletcher to Ireland were liable to give the impression that his wish to withdraw his pamphlet from the press, arose from scruples against the Minute, which he did not really entertain. He therefore replied to the Narrative by the publication of his Second Check, with an introductory letter to Wesley, in which he quotes a letter that he had addressed to Shirley showing that in his correspondence with Ireland he had proposed to withdraw his First Check for personal reasons, and not because of any doubt of the Minute, though he believed the latter might have been better guarded in its language. "Whether my letters are suppressed or not," he had written to Ireland, "the Minute *must* be vindicated. Mr. Wesley owes it to the Church, to the *real Protestants*, to all his societies, and to his own aspersed character."[20] He replies, in a post-

[19] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i, book ii, chap. 4.
[20] Works, vol. i, p. 68.

script, to a singular publication, purporting to be "A Conversation between Richard Hill, Esq., Rev. Mr. Madan, and Father Walsh," a Parisian monk. The latter pronounces the Minute to be Pelagian, and his Protestant interlocutors declare that "the extracts from the Minutes are too rotten even for a Papist to rest upon."[21] "Astonishing!" exclaims Fletcher, "that our opposers should think it worth their while to raise one recruit against us in the immense city of Paris, where fifty thousand might be raised against the Bible itself!"

These details would be unnecessary, if not tedious, here, were it not that partisan accounts of the controversy have persistently represented Fletcher as wavering and even conscientiously scrupling about the part he was taking in it.[22] On the contrary, he advances through the discussions of his Checks with a triumphant step, logically and morally triumphant; with a Christian temper which knows no disturbance, a logic which admits of no refutation. But he continued to have serious misgivings respecting the personal effect of the controversy on the combatants themselves, and his sanctified conscience revolted from the probability of any moral injury to his antagonists. He expressed his apprehensions to his friends, and regretted his First Check as a "necessary evil." Charles Wesley responded, that the question needed such a discussion; that Lady Huntingdon had pronounced his brother "a Papist unmasked," a "heretic," and an "apostate;" that "a poem on his apostasy" was about to appear; that letters against him "had been sent to every serious preacher, Churchman and Dissenter, through the land, together with the Gospel Magazine," a bad-tempered periodical, started by the Calvinistic party, but afterward abandoned. "Great," he adds, "are the shoutings, Now that he lieth let him rise up no more! This is all the cry; his dearest friends and children are staggered, and scarce know what to think. You, in

[21] Conversation between Richard Hill, Esq., etc. London, 1771.

[22] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 39; corrected by Jackson, Life of C. Wesley, chap. 23.

your corner, cannot conceive the mischief that has been done and is still doing. But your letters, in the hands of Providence, may answer the good ends you proposed by writing them."[23] Fletcher hesitated no more.

Shirley, whose Narrative was written in the best spirit, recanted his sermons, (which Fletcher had justly used as confirmatory of the doctrine of the Minute,) but did not answer the Second Check. Sir Richard Hill now (1772) entered the field; he had shown an aptitude for controversy in his *Pietas Oxoniensis* and *Goliath Slain*, in defense of the expelled students of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford. He addressed Five Letters to Fletcher, and called forth the Third Check from Madeley. Sir Richard responded in Six Letters, and his brother Rowland joined in the assault with characteristic pamphlets.[24] Meanwhile Rev. Walter Sellon and Thomas Olivers entered into the fray. Both of them were staunch friends of Wesley, and good logicians. Sellon had been a baker, but joined Wesley's itinerants, and afterward, by Lady Huntingdon's influence, obtained orders in the Church. By thorough self-culture he had become an accomplished divine. Olivers was one of those trophies of Methodism which so often astonish us in its early history. He was "a sturdy Welshman," as Southey calls him, in allusion to his part in this controversy, and had been rescued by Methodism from almost hopeless reprobacy. He was a shoemaker, and traveled at large through the country, working only at intervals, plunging into vice, contracting debts, and congratulating himself on his adroitness in fraud. Reclaimed under Whitefield's preaching, he became industrious,

[23] Preface to Fletcher's Second Check. The letter is anonymous, but Jackson attributes it to Charles Wesley. Life of C. Wesley, chap. 23.

[24] Sir Richard Hill's publications, besides the "Conversation" and the two series of "Letters," were, "A Review of all the Doctrines taught by Rev. John Wesley, to which are added, a Farrago of Hot and Cold Medicines," etc.: "Logica Wesleiensis; or, a Farrago double-distilled, with a Heroic Poem in praise of John Wesley;" "The Finishing Stroke," etc.; "Three Letters, written by Richard Hill, Esq., to Rev. John Fletcher," etc.

and, purchasing a horse, rode to his old haunts to pay his debts with interest, and to beg pardon of all who had suffered from his vices. He was a laborious preacher under Wesley. His indefatigable studies improved his naturally strong faculties to uncommon vigor, and Wesley made him his editor in London. He not only distinguished himself in the present controversy, but composed hymns and music which the world will never let die.[25] One of the most painful facts in the controversy is the manner in which this man, so nobly self-redeemed, was treated by his opponents. Sir Richard Hill would not, because he really could not, answer his keen logic, but rebuked him as an impertinent "little quadruped" beneath his notice, and whom he would not "stop to lash, or even order his footman to lash with his whip." The rugged Welshman resented, and had an honest right to resent, such treatment; and though inferior to his opponent in the social accident of rank, showed himself superior to him in native intellect and genuine manhood.[26]

The Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady entered the arena with great ability and equal vehemence. He presented one of those inexplicable combinations of great virtues and great defects, not to call them vices, which at once excite our wonder, and teach us a lesson of charity for the infirmities of our common humanity. His father died at the siege of Carthagena, and the military spirit was ever prompt for cor-

[25] He wrote the magnificent hymn, "The God of Abraham praise," (Nos. 944–6 in the American Methodist Hymn Book,) of which Montgomery says: "There is not in our language a lyric of more majestic style, more elevated thought, or more glowing imagery." He also composed the excellent tune called "Helmsley," for the hymn, "Lo! he comes with clouds descending," etc. The latter hymn has been erroneously attributed to him.

[26] Olivers' contributions to the controversy were, 1. A Letter to Mr. Toplady, occasioned by his late Letter to the Rev. Mr. Wesley. 2. A Scourge to Calumny, in two parts, inscribed to Richard Hill, Esq., Part the First demonstrating the Absurdity of that Gentleman's Farrago; part the second containing a full Answer to all that is material in his Farrago double-distilled. 3. A Rod for a Reviler; or, an Answer to Mr. Rowland Hill's Letter to the Rev. John Wesley.

troversy in the son. He was educated at Westminster and Dublin, and converted, when but sixteen years old, in a barn in Ireland, under a discourse from an illiterate lay preacher. A good scholar, a keen thinker, a most vigorous though often as coarse a writer, he was also a man of genuine piety and ardent zeal. His hymns are known throughout English Christendom, and his theological writings, filling six octavos, are recognized as invincible standards by hyper-Calvinists generally. He assailed Olivers with merciless severity, but he had the magnanimity, on better acquaintance, to acknowledge the worth of the "Methodist Cobbler." They accidentally met, and Toplady wrote to a friend: "To say the truth, I am glad I saw Mr. Olivers, for he appears to be a person of stronger sense and better behavior than I imagined." [27]

Fletcher meanwhile continued his pamphlets. His Fourth Check was entitled "Logica Genevensis," a reply to both Sir Richard and Rowland Hill. Sir Richard now proposed, in a private letter to Fletcher, to discontinue the controversy; but the latter deemed it important to pursue the discussion till the Antinomianism of the day should be fully refuted. Sir Richard replied in an unfortunate private letter, and soon after published another pamphlet, entitled "The Finishing Stroke," to which Fletcher replied in a Fifth Check, and in the second part of the same work responded to Berridge, the eccentric vicar of Everton, who, of course, could not keep out of the battle, but had published "The Christian World Unmasked." Madan also had a hand in the strife, though not openly; Fletcher's private correspondence shows that he circulated a manuscript essay against Wesley's Minute, and revised for the press the pamphlets of Rowland Hill.[28] Hervey, even, singed his gossamer wings in the fire of the field.

[27] Southey's Life of Wesley, chapter 25. Southey speaks heartily of the good Welshman, but more from his sympathy with Arminianism than with Methodism.

[28] Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 23.

Ireland, of Bristol, and Thornton, of London, still endeavored to promote a reconciliation of the parties, and received to their hospitalities the opposing writers. They provided for a meeting between Fletcher and Lady Huntingdon, and his next Check, (1774,) entitled "An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism," contained "An Essay on Truth, or a Rational Vindication of the Doctrine of Salvation by Faith," dedicated to her, in which he endeavored to show the safe middle ground between Antinomianism and Pelagianism, on which considerate men of both parties could stand. Fletcher's health suffered much during this prolonged contest; he resorted for relief to Stoke Newington, where, amid the hospitalities of an eminent Christian family, he was visited by several of his most distinguished opponents, who left him, wondering at his heresies and his saintliness. His entertainment there was a sort of social ovation, but he consecrated the mansion into a social sanctuary. Rowland Hill came to shake his hand as a brother. A visitor said: "I went to see a man with one foot in the grave, but found him with one foot in heaven."[29]

After a pause of some months the battle was resumed (1775) by Toplady's "Historic Proofs of the Calvinism of the Church of England," to which Sellon replied in his "Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Calvinism," having already published his "Arguments against the Doctrine of General Redemption considered," and his "Defense of God's Sovereignty."[30] Toplady kept up a brisk fire by the publication of his "Sermon on Free Will and Merit," his "Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Neces-

[29] Among the guests who thronged to him at Newington was William Perronet, one of the sons of Wesley's venerable friend and counselor at Shoreham. Young Perronet "often said that the first sight of Mr. Fletcher fixed an impression upon his mind which never wore off till it issued in a real conversion to God." Benson's Fletcher, chap. 6.

[30] Fletcher says of the "Church of England Vindicated:" "I have found it a masterly mixture of the skill belonging to the sensible scholar, the good logician, and the sound Anti-Crispian divine." Of Sellon's whole works he says: "All these are well worth the reading of every pious and sensible man." Third Check, Works, vol. i.

sity asserted," and other works. His "Scheme" was a reply to a tract by Wesley. Fletcher responded in "Remarks on Mr. Toplady's Scheme," and "An Answer to Mr. Toplady's Vindication of the Decrees;" and concluded the controversy with his "Last Check to Antinomianism," a defense of Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection, an essay of which it may justly be said, that its temper illustrates the doctrine which its logic defends.

During six years had this controversy raged. The press teemed with pamphlets on both sides, and by the time the contest was over the virtual unity of Calvinistic and Arminian Methodism had ended. When the smoke of the battle cleared away, the two parties could only be seen, remotely and permanently apart, in the opposite extremities of the field; and for more than three-quarters of a century their reciprocal recognitions have been mostly invidious, and their respective accounts of the great and decisive struggle have been so much affected by their mutual prejudices, that the impartial student finds it expedient to dismiss his inquiries respecting it, and console himself by the obvious good results which the wisdom of God has brought forth from this human folly, and the really excellent characters and godly lives of the men whose infirmities rendered the conflict so fierce and so protracted.

The writers of both parties have usually assigned to each other's side the responsibility of the acerbity of the dispute. It is not necessary to encumber our pages with examples of its bitterness; it is, however, no more than due to the fidelity of history to say, that the reader could hardly find, in a vocabulary of Billingsgate, more surprising illustrations of the language of crimination, and even of "slang." Nearly all writers who have treated of the controversy concur, nevertheless, in distinguishing one exception. Fletcher, the chief Arminian champion, was declining in health during the contest, and he wrote, not only as on the verge of the grave, but as at the gate of heaven. Amid the strife he wrote to his friend Ireland: "O how life goes! I

walked, now I gallop into eternity! The bowl of life goes rapidly down the steep hill of time. Let us be wise; embrace we Jesus and the resurrection."[31] To Charles Wesley he wrote: "I thank God I feel myself in a good degree dead to praise and dispraise; I hope at least that it is so, because I do not feel that the one lifts me up, or that the other dejects me. I want to see a Pentecostal Christian Church; and if it is not to be seen at this time upon earth, I am willing to go and see this glorious wonder in heaven." It can be said of his controversial pamphets, that they may be read by devout men, even as aids to devotion; they are severe only in the keenness of their arguments; they glow with a continuous but unobtrusive strain of Christian exhortation; the argument alternates with pleas for peace; with practical addresses to "imperfect believers who embrace the doctrine of Christian perfection," to "perfect Christians," to "Christians who disbelieve the doctrine of Perfection," and with directions "how to secure the blessings of peace and brotherly love." Dixon, the principal of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, and the defender of its expelled Methodist students, wrote to Benson, after reading the First Check: "Too much cannot be said in commendation of them. I had not read his first letter before I was so charmed with the spirit, as well as the abilities, of the writer, that the gushing tears could not be hindered from giving full testimony of my heartfelt satisfaction."[32]

It may be probably affirmed that no man, previously un-

[31] Benson's Life of Fletcher, chap. 6.

[32] Benson's Fletcher, chap. 5. Southey says: "If ever true Christian charity was manifested in polemical writing, it was by Fletcher of Madeley. Even theological controversy never, in the slightest degree, irritated his heavenly temper. . . In such a temper did this saintly man address himself to the work of controversy; and he carried it on with correspondent candor, and with distinguished ability. His manner is diffuse, and the florid parts, and the unction, betray their French origin; but the reasoning is acute and clear; the spirit of his writings is beautiful, and he was master of the subject in all its bearings. His great object was to conciliate the two parties, and to draw the line between the solifidian and Pelagian errors." Life of Wesley, chap. 25.

determined in his opinions on the Calvinistic controversy, can read Fletcher's Checks through, without closing them an Arminian; and it is no detraction from them to add, that this effect is owing to their moral, as well as to their logical power. "I nothing wonder," says Wesley, "at a serious clergyman who, being resolved to live and die in his own opinion, when pressed to read them, replied, 'No, I will never read them, for if I did I should be of his mind.'"[33]

As literary and controversial productions, they have been estimated with prejudice by the respective parties; the one pronouncing them unrivaled, the other superficial. If the opinion of one of our most accomplished writers, respecting the greatest of modern philosophers,[34] is correct, that his genius was, and that the true philosophic genius always is, a fusion of reason and imagination, then Fletcher of Madeley was hardly less a philosopher than a saint. His illustrative power surprises us on almost every page; and what is logic but the deduction of truth from what we already know—and what is that deduction but a process of illustrative comparison—what the syllogism itself but a formula of comparison?

Written as detached pamphlets, and abounding in contemporary and personal references, the Checks could not possibly have the consistence and compactness of a thorough treatise on the difficult questions of the great "Quinquarticular Controversy." But they comprehend, nevertheless, nearly every important thesis of the subject. Its highest philosophical questions—theories of the Freedom of the Will, Prescience, Fatalism—are elaborately discussed by them, as in the "Remarks on Toplady's Scheme of Necessity," and the "Answer to Toplady's Vindication of Decrees." The Scriptural argument is thorough; and exegetical expositions are given in detail, as in the "Discussion of the ninth chapter to the Romans," and the "View of St. Paul's Doctrine of the first chapter to the Ephesians." No writer

[33] Wesley's Life of Fletcher. Works, vol. vi.

[34] Sir James Mackintosh on Lord Bacon, "Progress of Ethical Science."

has better balanced the apparently contradictory passages of Scripture on the question.[35] The popular argument has never, perhaps, been more effectively drawn out; and if, from the necessities of the pamphlet combat, the philosophical examination of the subject is not given with sufficient consecutiveness and closeness, what, after all, is the philosophical sphere of the controversy but a region of mists and abstractions, where the legitimate logical points are impalpable, and where, in any other questions of human interest—in theories of science, of government, of morals—the highest philosophy finds itself baffled, and recovers its confidence only by retreating to the more practicable grounds of consciousness, common reason, and common sense? The consciousness of the freedom of the will, and the consequent responsibility of man for his moral acts, are unshakable postulates, strongholds of power in this ancient controversy, which tower forever above the fogs of its polemics, and give a supremacy to its popular logic, before which philosophy has ever recoiled, and will ever have to recoil. Outraging these postulates, philosophy ceases to be philosophy, and becomes demented metaphysics. The Church may indeed despair of ever being relieved from the intolerable incubus of this ancient question till its insoluble problems are separated from dogmatic theology, and assigned to the sphere of metaphysics; and the practical tendency of modern thought justifies the hope that even such a deliverance may yet be attained.[36]

As to the historical results of these writings, the emphatic language with which they have already been mentioned is not exaggerated. "Fletcher's Checks," says one of his critics, who probably never read them through, "are by this

[35] Scriptural Scales, etc.; Second part of Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism. Works, vol. ii.

[36] Buckle (Introduction to the History of Civilization, vol. i, chap. 1) says that "among the more advanced thinkers there is a growing opinion that both doctrines [Predestination and Freewill] are wrong; or, at all events, that we have no sufficient evidence of their truth." His opinion (chap. 14) that Calvinism is a faith for the democratic, and Arminianism for the aristocratic classes, is one of those generalizations, from a few accidental facts, which are too characteristic of his important work.

time forgotten."[37] Quite otherwise is the fact. No polemical works of a former age are so extensively circulated as these "Checks." They are read more to-day than they were during the excitement of the controversy. They control the opinions of the largest and most effective body of evangelical clergymen on the earth. They are staples in every Methodist publishing house. Every Methodist preacher is supposed to read them as an indispensable part of his theological studies, and they are found at all points of the globe whither Methodist preachers have borne the cross. They have been more influential in the denomination than Wesley's own controversial writings on the subject; for he was content to pursue his itinerant work, replying but briefly to the Hills,[38] and leaving the contest to Fletcher.

This controversy has unquestionably influenced, if not directly through Fletcher's writings, yet indirectly through Methodism, the subsequent tone of theological thought in much of the Protestant world. Arminianism, after its proscription at Dort, became perverted by latitudinarianism and other errors which obscured the real faith of Arminius to the eyes of evangelical Christendom generally. Yet it has been justly remarked, that these were results with which neither Arminius nor the genuine Arminian theology had anything to do; and to trace them to him were not more just than to trace German neology to Luther, and German Socinianism to Calvin.[39] It passed through the capricious changes to which nearly all opinions were subject, from the times of Arminius to the French Revolution. In Holland it advocated liberty of opinion; in France, meanwhile, it arrayed the Jesuits against the Jansenists, who were the real reformers, and defenders of free thought. In England, like Calvinism, it became complicated with political parties. The Puritans overthrew it with the national Church; it returned

[37] Isaac Taylor, Wesley and Methodism, p. 115. New York, 1852.

[38] "Remarks on Mr. Hill's Review," etc.; "Answer to Rowland Hill's Imposture Detected;" "Remarks on Mr. Hill's Farrago double-distilled;" Wesley's Works, vol. vi.

[39] Guthrie's Life of Arminius, and the Controversy in his Times.

at the Restoration, and swayed the Establishment for half a century. The position of the Church, in relation to English Puritanism and Scotch Presbyterianism, prejudiced its influence as a theological system, and it became associated, in the public mind, with the varying opinions of its great men, Episcopius, Grotius, Limborch, Casaubon, Vossius, Le Clerc, and Wetstein on the Continent; Cudworth, Tillotson, Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, Burnet, and Pearson in England. Under the Stuarts it was "High Church," formal, and without spiritual life; but under Methodism it resumed its original evangelical purity, took a popular form, and became energetic with moral vitality. In its genuine character it is as remote from Pelagianism as is Calvinism itself.[40] It differs from the latter essentially, only on the questions of predestination and perseverance. In both England and America Methodism had to correct the false significance which the public mind attached to the term Arminianism, and it has effectively done so. "This controversy," says the most commanding intellect of Wesleyan Methodism, "has been productive of important consequences. It showed to the pious and moderate Calvinists how well the richest views of evangelical truth could be united with Arminianism; and it effected, by its bold and fearless exhibition of the logical consequences of the Doctrines of the Decrees, much greater moderation in those who still admitted them, and gave birth to some softened modifications of Calvinism in the age that followed—an effect which has remained to this day."[41]

Though the two Methodistic parties were now irreconcilably divided, and the combatants could not readily recover from

[40] Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, by Drs. M'Clintock and Strong. New York, 1859. See also an elaborate article by Professor Stuart on the "Creed, etc., of Arminius," in the Biblical Repository, vol. i. He says: "Let the injustice then of merging Pelagius and Arminius together no more be done among us, as it often has been." And again: "Most of the accusations of heresy made against him appear to be the offspring of suspicion, or of a wrong construction of his words." See also the Works of Arminius, translated by Nichols and Bagnall, 3 vols. Auburn, 1853.

[41] Richard Watson's Life of Wesley, chap. 11.

their irritations, they ceased to contend, and resumed their more useful labors in their more defined spheres. Rowland Hill lamented his harsh language, and suppressed one of his severest publications. "Thus," he wrote, "have I done my utmost to prevent the evil that might arise from my wrong touches of the ark of God."[42] He made, as we have seen, a friendly visit to Fletcher, during his retreat for health at Stoke Newington. Berridge welcomed the Madeley vicar to his parsonage at Everton. Fletcher had not been there for about twenty years, and it was doubtful what effect the protracted controversy had produced on the peculiar temper of his old friend. The Aristophanic rector had written with his characteristic sarcasm; but as his opponent entered the parsonage, Berridge ran toward him, took him into his arms, and wept. "My dear brother," he sobbed, "this is indeed a satisfaction I never expected. How could we write against each other, when we both aim at the same thing, the glory of God, and the good of souls! But my book lies quietly on the shelf; and there let it lie." "I retired," says Fletcher's traveling companion, "leaving the pious controversialists to themselves for about two hours. On my return I found them in the true spirit of Christian love, and mutually as unwilling to part as they had been happy in meeting each other. 'Brother,' said Berridge, 'we must not part without your praying with us.' The servants being called in, Fletcher offered up a prayer, filled with petitions for their being led by the Holy Spirit to greater degrees of sanctification and usefulness as ministers; and dwelt much upon that effusion of the Spirit which fills the pages of his Tract called, 'The Reconciliation.' Berridge then began, and was equally warm in prayer for blessings upon 'his dear brother.' They were indeed so united in love that we were obliged, in a manner, to tear away Fletcher, that he might keep his appointment with Venn, whom he was to meet

[42] Sidney's Life of Rowland Hill, chap. 4. His contributions to the Controversy were: "Imposture Detected," etc. Bristol, 1777; and "A Full Answer to Rev. John Wesley," etc. Bristol, 1777.

at dinner at St. Neot's. Here we found that most excellent minister waiting for us; and here we had another instance that good men of different sentiments need only be brought together, and unite at a throne of grace, to prove that they are of one heart. They met, they conversed, and parted with every demonstration of the most cordial and Christian affection. Venn was so totally absorbed by his subject, while speaking of the duties of ministers, that Fletcher was obliged to remind him, playfully, that he had a meal before him." "He was like an angel on earth," said Venn, afterward, alluding to him before his congregation at Yelling.[43]

Sir Richard Hill, retiring from the controversy, found worthier employment in active religious duties, and the service of his country in Parliament. During a long life he was a prominent supporter of the evangelical interests of his times, and a companion of the "good men of Clapham."

By the courtesy of Ireland, Shirley and Fletcher had at least one brotherly interview. Ireland's hospitable home continued to be the frequent resort of the leaders of both parties, and we are indebted to him for the portrait which has rendered the features of Fletcher familiar to the Christian world. Venn, who, though a Calvinist, kept aloof from the contention, spent six weeks under Ireland's roof with Fletcher, "during which," he says, "I never heard him say a single word which was not proper to be spoken, and which had not a tendency to minister grace to the hearers. I have known all the great men for sixty years, but I have known none like him."

During this visit at Ireland's house, an humble Wesleyan itinerant, on his way to Cornwall, stopped at Bristol to greet the Arminian champion. As he arrived at the mansion, with two fellow-itinerants, Fletcher was returning from a horseback ride, which had been enjoined by his physician. He recognized them as Methodist preachers, and, dismounting, hastened toward them with extended arms. They were struck by his "apostolic appearance." He repeated most

[43] Cox's Life of Fletcher, second edition. London.

of the sixteenth chapter of John, on the promise of the Holy Ghost. "My soul," says one of the visitors, "was dissolved into tenderness, and became as melting wax before the fire!" They regretted the effect of his controversial labors upon his health. "If he fell a victim," he replied, "it was in a good cause." After a little further conversation, "upon the universal love of God in Christ Jesus," the visitors were about to take their leave, when Ireland sent his footman into the yard with a bottle of wine, and slices of bread upon a waiter; they all uncovered their heads while Fletcher implored a blessing upon the refreshment; which he had no sooner done, than he handed first the bread to each, and then lifting up his eyes to heaven pronounced the words: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." Afterward, presenting them the wine, he said in like manner: "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. "Such a sacrament," says the narrator, "I never had before. A sense of the Divine presence rested upon us all, and we were melted into floods of tears. We then mounted our horses and rode away. That hour more than repaid me for my whole journey from Edinburgh to Cornwall."[44]

Such was Fletcher, coming out of the strife of this six years' controversy. Such he had been when he entered it, and such he continued to be till he entered heaven. If an apparently disproportionate commendation has been given to him in this sketch of the controversy, it is because it is historically due to him; and because of the rare model which he presents, of the theological controversialist—the most perfect one, perhaps, to be found in the history of polemics.

Shirley continued his labors as a tireless evangelist some nine or ten years longer. At the last glimpse we get of him he is sitting in Dublin, "in his chair, unable to lie in his bed," dying of dropsy, but preaching "to great numbers," who crowded the drawing-rooms, the lobbies, and the stair-

[44] Life of James Rogers, in "Early Methodist Preachers," vol. ii.

case, as far as his voice could be heard, and "the benediction of the Spirit rested on his dying labors in the conversion and sanctification of many who heard him."[45]

Toplady was the ablest and also the severest of Fletcher's opponents. His language respecting Wesley was hostile even to the last.[46] Wesley could not comprehend, any more than we can, how so much apparent rancor could consist with genuine piety, and too readily credited, and, it is said, circulated, unfavorable reports of his death.[47] He was as earnest, however; as he was severe. He records the struggle between the good and the evil within him: "Before I went to bed God gave me such a sense of his love as came but little short of full assurance. Who am I, O Lord? The weakest and the vilest of all thy called ones: not only the least of saints, but the chief of sinners; but though a sinner, yet sanctified, in part, by the Holy Ghost given unto me. My shortcomings and my misdoings, my unbelief and want of love, would sink me into the nethermost hell, were not Jesus my righteousness and my redemption. There is no sin which I should not commit were not Jesus, by the power of his Spirit, my sanctification."[48]

A short time before his death, while the sturdy polemic was gasping with consumption, a remarkable scene occurred in his chapel at Orange-street, London. Reports were circulated that he had solicited an interview with Wesley, and had asked his pardon for the severity of his writings. The belligerent but honest spirit of the restless warrior was roused. By his own request, and against the remonstrances of his physician and family, he was borne to his altar, and there made his "Dying Avowal," afterward written out by his trembling hand, and published, in which he declared that he retracted nothing, but was about to die, steadfast to his principles and his writings. He was borne

[45] Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, vol ii. chap. 37. A portrait of him remains in Cheshunt College, England.

[46] Dying Avowal, p. 4. London, 1778.

[47] Sidney's Rowland Hill, chap. v.

[48] Memoir prefixed to his Works, p. 8. London, 1827.

back to his chamber, and soon after to his grave. He was honest in his errors, and had a stout English heart, which commands our wonder if not our admiration, in spite of his faults. He would have stood bravest among his countrymen amid the fire of Trafalgar or Waterloo, but it requires a more exalted courage to confront and condemn our own errors. His most fervent admirers would admire him more had he regretted, in dying, the hardly paralleled virulence of his controversial writings.[49]

Within one year after the controversy he, too, triumphed in the last great fight. On his death-bed he could say that he "had not had for several months the least doubt of his personal interest in Christ." Surrounded by weeping friends, none more sympathetic than his fellow-controversialist, Rowland Hill, he exclaimed, "I am the happiest man in the world." "O how this soul of mine longs to be gone, like a bird out of a cage, to the realms of bliss! O that some guardian angel might be commissioned, for I long to be absent from the body."

Thus does God pardon the infirmities of his sincere though erring servants, and gather them where they can "see eye to eye;" and thus would his infinite love reprove our mutual distrusts and uncharitableness.

We may retire then from this stormy battle-field, grateful that, amid its din and smoke, we have been able to catch some memorable glimpses of the clear and serene heaven above it.

[49] The best edition of his works is that of Chidley, in one royal octavo volume. London, 1837. His chief productions against the Arminian Methodists are, 1. Historical proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England. 2. Letter to Wesley relative to his Abridgment of Zanchius on Predestination. 3. More Work for Mr. Wesley, and a Vindication of the Decrees and Providence of God. 4. An Old Fox tarred and feathered; occasioned by Mr. Wesley's Calm Address to the American Colonies. 5. The Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity asserted. His writings generally are an astonishing mass of learning eloquence, piety, and vituperation.

CHAPTER III.

CALVINISTIC METHODISM FROM THE DEATH OF WHITEFIELD TO THE DEATH OF THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

Celebration at Trevecca — Whitefield's Property in America — Habersham — Cornelius Winter denied Ordination — Plans of the Countess for America — A Missionary Festival and Embarkation — Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon Slaveholders — Howell Harris — His Itinerant Adventures — His Piety — Mobs — Methodist Socialism at Trevecca — Its Christian Soldiers — Harris turns Soldier to fight against Popery — Howell Davies — Death of Harris — Grand Scene at his Burial — Daniel Rowlands, the Welsh "Thunderer" — "Shouting" — Charles of Bala — Final Views of Calvinistic Methodism in England — Cornwall — De Courcy — Newton — Cowper — Lady Huntingdon's Societies become Dissenters — Her Death — Fate of her Connection — The "Good Men of Clapham."

While the controversial battle raged, the leading evangelists of both parties were active in their ministerial labors. Soon after the appearance of Wesley's anti-Calvinistic Minute, August, 1770, the Countess of Huntingdon passed through Bristol, where Wesley awaited her, by previous arrangement, to accompany her to the anniversary of the Trevecca College; but she had determined to exclude him from her pulpits so long as he held the doctrines declared at the late Conference, and she wrote him to that effect. There were more inviting scenes for him; without replying he left Bristol the next day to itinerate among the mines of Cornwall, and was never afterward invited to preach in her ladyship's chapels.[1]

Attended by a company of her ministers, and distinguished laymen and ladies of rank, she arrived at Trevecca, where they

[1] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii., chap. 32.

were received by Rowlands, Harris, and other Welsh preachers, and where a jubilee, like that already described, was celebrated, through a series of days. Venn, Berridge, Shirley, and other clergymen of the Establishment, ten of whom were present, shared in the festivities. Ireland, of Bristol, was with them, and Thornton, of London, had sent five hundred pounds for the aid of the college. The concourse of visitors was "exceedingly great." Services from a platform, in the castle court, were held early and late. The exercises were varied by preaching in English and Welsh, repeated administrations of the Lord's Supper, exhortations, prayer meetings, a public dinner, and the usual fervent demonstrations of the ardent Welsh Methodists. It was the last anniversary under Fletcher's presidency; he was present, administering the sacrament and sharing in the other ceremonies, and after a sermon from Venn, closed the scene with a prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the college, that it might prove a lasting blessing to the Church of Christ; upon its noble foundress, that she might long be spared to reap with joy the fruits of her generous and disinterested labors; and upon the ministers and students, that they might "prove polished shafts in the Redeemer's quiver, zealous and laborious in extending the knowledge of their divine Master, and in the last great day be found at his right hand." The next morning, as they were about to part, Fletcher, who was to meet them no more, knelt in the chapel with his aged friend, Venn, and his future opponents, Shirley and Berridge, and commended them and their brethren in the ministry to the grace of God. "A blessed influence from on high rested upon the assembled multitude."

Trevecca continued for years to be the resort of the Calvinistic Methodists, and to replenish their pulpits, as well as to afford important ministerial supplies to the Dissenters and the Church. The countess resided there much of her time; it was a convenient head-quarters for the extended work which she was sustaining, and she could readily dispatch assistance from it to her many pulpits. Its students were trained

to active religious labors; horses were kept to convey them on Saturdays to distant points, while nearer appointments were visited on foot, and the towns and villages within thirty miles around, felt continually the powerful influence of the school. Though the pupils were "irregular troops," yet it is said they "brought in more captives than the disciplined squadrons, and were eminently serviceable to the cause of real religion." Frequently they went forth on remote "districts" or "rounds," preaching in fields, barns, market-places, and private houses. They constituted an important part of that itinerant evangelization which was breaking into the strongholds of darkness and vice among the neglected portions of the country, and they founded or resuscitated many Churches, where stated pastors and crowded congregations were afterward maintained. The anniversary solemnities of the college remind us of American Methodist camp-meetings. Toplady attended one in which "a thousand and three hundred horses" were turned into a large adjacent field, besides what were stationed in neighboring villages, and a great number of carriages. A scaffold was erected at one end of the college court, on which a book-stand was placed, and "thence," he writes, "six or seven of us preached successively, to one of the most attentive and most lively congregations I ever beheld, and great grace seemed to be upon us." Another visitor speaks of three hundred people breakfasting together on the premises; of sermons, exhortations, sacraments, love-feasts, in English and Welsh; of "many very hearty amens, and a fervent crying of 'Glory to God,'" especially under the mighty preaching of Rowlands; of every room in the building "being converted into a chapel; preaching in one, praying in another, exhorting and singing of hymns in others."

The death of Whitefield was a severe loss to Calvinistic Methodism in England, but an irreparable disaster to its plans respecting the southern part of the American colonies. Lady Huntingdon had been appointed, in his will, sole pro-

prietor of his properties in Georgia, and upon her now devolved the task of directing the affairs of his Orphan House at Bethesda, near Savannah. The Hon. James Habersham, a wealthy merchant of that city, had been named by him executor of his affairs in the province; he was the steadfast friend of Whitefield, had been a member of the original Methodist company at Oxford, and lived and died in the faith.[2] Cornelius Winter, who accompanied Whitefield in his last voyage to America, returned, after his death, to London, with letters from Wright, governor of the colony, and Habersham, recommending him to influential persons in England for ordination, that he might return and pursue, with proper sanctions, his labors in the colony, and especially might prosecute Whitefield's favorite plans of missionary labor among the negroes and Indians. Applications were made to the Bishop of London for his ordination, and he had an interview with the prelate, but was rudely repulsed as a Whitefield Methodist. Franklin, who was in London representing American affairs, used his influence for him, but in vain. The colonies were rebellious, and, said the apostolic bishop, "You have been a preacher with Mr. Whitefield, which is illegal. When you return to America let me know!" Winter replied: "My lord, I cannot think of returning without ordination." "Very well," rejoined the bishop, with a significant bow; "and thus they parted till the day of judgment."

A day of fasting and prayer was observed in all the chapels of the countess in behalf of their cause in Georgia. In 1772, having bought up all claims of heirs-at-law to Whitefield's property in the province, she formed the design of appointing a principal and a pastor for the Orphan House, and of dispatching with them a corps of preachers to prosecute the evangelization of the southern colonies. She issued

[2] He died in great peace, August 29, 1775, leaving a son, Joseph Habersham, Postmaster-General of the United States, who was a correspondent of Lady Huntingdon, and who died in November, 1815. Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 40.

a Circular, calling upon all the ministers and students in her "connection" to meet at Trevecca, there to examine such pupils as might volunteer for the service; to consecrate the projected measure with religious exercises; and to "plan out the work of the connection more effectually in England, North and South Wales, and Ireland." Accordingly, on the 9th of October, another memorable jubilee began in the ancient castle of Trevecca.

Accompanied by eminent clergymen and laymen, she was met on the route by students from the college, and many visitors wending their way from various parts of the country toward the Welsh Methodist Mount Zion. On their arrival they were received by the students with the hymn, "Welcome, blessed servants," and with prayer at their entrance; and at dinner the students sang, "Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim." A sermon was preached in the evening, and the day was closed with supper, singing, and prayers. Public services were begun the next day, and were continued for a fortnight. Independently of the American mission, the occasion was one of great local benefit, and of general advantage to the Calvinistic cause by the revision of its interests in all the United Kingdom.

A missionary band was organized, and on the 27th of October sailed from Blackwall to Gravesend, for America. It was one of the earliest of those sublime spectacles of missionary embarkation which, from the impulse that Methodism was then giving to English Protestantism, have now become common. Before their departure the missionaries preached daily to vast crowds in the Tabernacle, in Tottenham Court Chapel, and in the open air on Tower Hill. The religious community of the metropolis was stirred by the occasion, and it was not inaptly called "*The Methodist Jubilee.*" An embarkation hymn, written by Shirley, was printed for the ceremony.[3] Immense throngs crowded the

[3] This poem was reproduced in the Evangelical Magazine, 1796, when the missionary ship Duff left England for the South Seas. It begins: "Go, destined vessel, heavenly freighted, go!"

river's side, and when the ship started a solemn and affecting scene was presented. Every countenance was suffused with tears; hats and handkerchiefs were to be seen waving in all directions, "bidding these servants of God farewell; and prayers and wishes ascended as a cloud of incense to the great Head of the Church, recommending them to his merciful protection and care. Such a spirit of prayer and supplication was poured out upon the people of God at this interesting period as has seldom been remembered. Every heart was affected; and the impressions then made were attended with the most beneficial results."

Though the trans-Atlantic design of the mission was not to be ultimately successful, yet it can never lose its interest as an illustration of the renovated evangelism of the times. "A remarkable outpouring of the Spirit," wrote the countess, attended the scene, and "nothing was ever so blessed as the spirit with which they all went."

In six weeks the missionary band arrived at Savannah, and were received at Whitefield's Orphan House, from which they soon went forth in all directions, preaching the "everlasting Gospel" with "signs following." They did extensive and profitable work, traveling about the country and laboring with all denominations. "Their labors were crowned with singular success, and many by their ministry received the light of the Gospel." They devoted themselves especially to the salvation of the African population. They strengthened the feeble and incipient churches on the southern frontiers of the country, and "aroused the dormant zeal of many to send the Gospel to their heathen neighbors," the aborigines.

During several years did these laborious missionaries prosecute their good work. The provincial government took an interest in their plans, and offered to build a church in Savannah, and present it to the countess. "The invitations," she wrote, "which I have for our ministry, in various parts of America, are so kind and affectionate that it looks as if we were to have our way free through the whole continent;"

"in all the back settlements we are assured that the people will build us chapels at their own expense." She organized a plan, which was encouraged by Lord Dartmouth, for a large grant of lands from the government for the endowment of extensive missions; and ministerial reinforcements were to be supplied from Trevecca, to meet the wants of the spiritually destitute regions of the country.[4]

The prospect was that Calvinistic Methodism would thus spread out over the southern portion of the colonies, and soon meet Arminian Methodism, which was now on its southward march. But it was otherwise designed in the counsels of Divine Providence. Methodism was to extend its sway over all those regions, but not with a divided interest. The Revolutionary war was looming not far in the distance, and the New World was to have its own Methodism as well as its own government. The Orphan House was destroyed by fire. After eight years of service the missionaries, following the example of most of the regular English clergy of the colonies, escaped to England in the British convoy, at the reduction of Charleston. The property of the Countess was finally appropriated by the Americans, and the southern field was left unoccupied and open for the American Arminian Methodists, who soon after bore the cross through its length and breadth.

[4] Vollstændige Geschichte der Methodisten in England, aus glaubwuerdigen Quellen, nebst den Lebensbeschreibungen ihrer beyden Stifter der Herrn Johann Wesley und George Whitefield. Von Dr. Johann Gottlieb Burkhard, etc. Complete History of the Methodists in England, from trustworthy authorities, with the biographies of their two founders, John Wesley and George Whitefield. By John Gottlieb Burkhard, D.D., Minister of the German Church of St. Mary in the Savoy, London. Appendix I. Nurnberg, 1795. I cannot recall any allusion to this important work in any Methodist writer, early or late. Burkhard lived in London before the death of Wesley; he knew personally the Countess of Huntingdon, and wrote much of his history before their deaths. It is in two volumes, in one, and is the first history of Methodism ever published, if we except the "Short History of the People called Methodists," appended by Wesley to his "Concise History of the Church." Its plan is comprehensive, and its spirit candid. I know of no copy in this country besides my own.

The Countess endeavored, during and after the war, to recover her important estates in Georgia for missionary purposes; she corresponded with Washington respecting them; Franklin accepted an appointment as one of her trustees; Laurens, President of Congress, imprisoned for some months in the Tower of London, became her friend and adviser, and his sons undertook, on their return to America, to adjust her claims there, but without success.[5]

In the course of the correspondence, as also in the will of Whitefield, we are startled by some unexpected disclosures respecting his Georgia property. No small amount of it consisted of slaves, and, what is still more startling, Whitefield appears to have been largely responsible for the introduction of this kind of property, so called, into the province. The humane Oglethorpe had projected the colony as an asylum for unfortunate debtors, from the intolerable penal inflictions of the British Code, at that time, on such sufferers; he invited thither also all persecuted Protestants.[6] He placed on the common seal of the corporation the cap of liberty, and slavery was not allowed in its settlements. "Slavery," he said, "is against the Gospel as well as the fundamental law of England. We refused, as trustees, to make a law permitting such a horrid crime."[7] The colony was designed for hardy workmen; but "slaves," it was alleged, "starve the poor laborer."

As early as 1740 Whitefield, seeing the feebleness of the colony, advocated measures for its increase, and the first of these expedients was "an allowance of negroes." He proposed to send Seward, his traveling companion, to England, to petition the trustees of the corporation to admit slavery, and also to allow the intro-

[5] The father of Laurens had been a correspondent and confidentlal adviser of Whitefield. Miss Laurens, afterward wife of Dr. Ramsay, the author of the Life of Washington, etc., was a personal friend of Lady Huntingdon.

[6] Harris's Memorials of Oglethorpe, chap. 7. Boston, 1841.

[7] Bancroft's History of the United States, vol iii, chap. 24.

duction of rum.[8] He became a slave-owner, and in the year of his death there were fifty slaves, men, women, and children, belonging to his Orphan House. In his will he bequeathed to the Countess his "lands, negroes, books, and furniture;"[9] and after his death her letters to America, respecting his property, continually refer to the value and sale of his slaves. Those sentiments against slavery, which afterward prevailed in the legislation of England, and which were largely owing to the influence of Methodism, were as yet quite latent. Whitefield seems to have shared the fallacious views of the good Las Casas, which, from motives of humanity, led to the most tragic scenes of inhumanity in the records of the world.

While absorbed in their schemes for America, the Calvinistic Methodists were startled by the report of the death of Howell Harris, their champion in Wales, news which was no less afflicting to their Arminian brethren, for the fervent and catholic spirit of Harris sympathized with both parties, notwithstanding his acknowledged Calvinism. Notable scenes had he passed through since we parted from him among the mobs of Bala.[10] We may pause here with interest and profit, to cast a few glances back upon the events of his memorable life.

When he began his great work in Wales, evangelical piety was, as we have seen, apparently almost extinct. "There was," he says, "at that time a general slumber over the land; no one," whom he knew, "had the true knowledge of God;[11] a universal deluge of swearing, lying, reveling, drunkenness, fighting, and gaming, had overspread the country like a mighty torrent; and that without any notice taken of it, or a stop," as far as he had seen, "attempted to be put to it." He had "never yet known one man awakened by the preaching in the country." It was under these circum-

[8] Compare Seward's Journal, cited in Gillies's Whitefield, chap. 4, with Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 41.

[9] Ibid., vol. ii, chap. 40.

[10] See vol. i, book iii, chap 3.

[11] Life of Howell Harris, Esq., Jackson's Ch. Biog., vol. 12, p. 108.

stances that he betook himself to the "highways and hedges," exhorting wherever he could draw the people together, in private dwellings, in barns, in market-houses, churchyards, and on the public roads, generally three, sometimes five and six times a day. The magistrates threatened him; the clergy preached against him, branding him with the character of a false prophet and deceiver; the mob was active; yet, he says, "during all this, I was carried as on the wings of an eagle, triumphantly above all." Griffith Jones, establishing his itinerant schools, went likewise into the public fields, and, with his traveling schoolmasters, initiated a general reformation. Daniel Rowlands, one of the most eloquent men ever known in Wales, followed their example, and stirred the whole population with his out-door preaching. Howell Davies was soon added to the little band of evangelists, and passed among the towns and villages like a herald. The frequent incursions of Whitefield and both Wesleys redoubled the new impulse, and now "religion," says Harris, "became the common talk; places of divine worship were everywhere crowded," and those "societies were begun which have since covered the principality with living Churches." Harris was a man of good sense, as well as ardent zeal. He was jealous of himself. "Thus I went on," he writes, "though with fear and trembling, lest others, of bad intentions, should take occasion to go about after my example; therefore I prayed that I might know God's will more perfectly; whether he was the only object of my love and desire, and whether his glory and the salvation of my fellow sinners were the only objects in my view. After examining the matter I had power to rely, in all things, on the strength of the grace that is in Christ Jesus for aid to carry me through the great work; and that if his honor should call me to suffer, to be imprisoned and tortured, I should find him faithful in every trial, in death, and to all eternity."

We find him, while pursuing his extraordinary labors and victories, continually seeking strength in self-abasement at

the foot of the cross. After triumphing amid the scenes of a horse-race, where he preached, opposed by shouts, and missiles, and the beating of a drum, he enters a church, where, bowing at the sacramental altar, he says: "I had a fresh sense of my poverty and vileness, so that I could cry feelingly, 'O Lord, I am the poorest, the vilest, and the unworthiest here before thee.' And when I thus fell at my Saviour's feet, I had sweet and close communion with him, and my soul felt a pity for all the world, a longing that they all might be born again, and be brought to the true knowledge of the Saviour of sinners. I felt that I deserved hell for not more valuing his precious blood. O the infinite value of that blood! It is the fruit of God's eternal love to sinners! Here are light, life, and liberty from the guilt and power of sin. O that I may abide here forever!" A man of such a spirit could not be defeated. Surrounded by the madness and perils of the mob, he would say within himself, and with sublime calmness, "Thou art chained, O Satan!" As with the Methodists in England, the rioters were often led on by "gentlemen," clergymen, and magistrates. In Mochyulleth, as he preached from a window, a mob, headed by an attorney and a clergyman, not only assailed him with outcries and stones, but one of them discharged a pistol at him, and when he left the town on horseback, they made a detour, and crossing his road, "began again," he writes, "to throw sticks and stones at me, till the Lord delivered me out of their hands." "By these means," he adds, "and many other trials, which I often passed through, I was at length so accustomed to them, that when I arose in the morning I was daily in expectation of my crosses." The tumults through which he advanced for some years, seem, in our day, hardly credible; they follow one another almost like daily skirmishes of a military campaign. At Newport the mob rushed on him with the utmost fury. They tore both his coat sleeves, one of them quite off, and took away his peruke. "I was now," he says, "in the rain, bareheaded, under the reproach of Christ!

Having a little silence, I discoursed on; but soon they shouted again, and pelted me with apples and dirt, flinging stones in the utmost rage about me. I had one blow on my forehead, which caused a rising, with a little blood. Many friends would have me give over in the tumult; but I could not be free to do that till the storm was over, and God was glorified over Satan. When we came to Caerleon everything seemed calm and quiet, while Brother Seward," a fellow itinerant, "prayed and discoursed sweetly by the market-house; but when I began to discourse after him they began to roar most horribly, pelting us with dung and dirt, throwing eggs, stones, and other hard substances, even in our faces, and shouted so loud as to drown my voice entirely." Seward got a severe blow on his right eye, which caused him much pain; and as it affected his left eye also, he was obliged to be led by the hand, blindfolded, for some days, till at last he became totally blind; but he continued to confront the mob by the side of his brave companion. "When we came to Monmouth town," continues Harris, "we had much the same treatment as we had at Newport and Caerleon. It happened to be the horse-race there, and both high and low were assembled against us. As I began to discourse on a table over against the town-hall windows, they ordered a drum to be beaten by our side; but the Lord enabled me to bear my testimony against their balls, assemblies, horse-races, whoredom, and drunken ness. The drum continued to beat, and the mob pelted us with apples, pears, stones, dirt, and a dead dog. During this storm Brother Seward was much afraid, yet he endured it with much calmness of spirit, saying, 'We had better endure this than hell." "And thus," adds the courageous Welshman, "all their opposition could not hinder our progress. In the strength of the Lord we went on from conquering to conquer."

Harris fought the early battles of Methodism in Wales through scenes hardly less perilous than those which Nelson encountered in England, and with equal heroism. As he traversed North Wales "the enemy," he says, (for these good

men always accused the devil rather than the mob itself,) "the enemy was provoked at my attempt thus to propagate the Gospel in his territories, and resolved to make a stand against me, and endeavor, as much as he should be permitted, to take away my life. After prayer and consultation, I intrusted God with my life and went on." Near Bala its parish minister met him with violent threatenings, and rushed upon him with "a great club to strike" him. "I told him," says Harris, "when I was reviled, I was taught not to revile again; and rode on quietly." Entering the town, he was informed that all the county rabble were met together to attack him. At the request of his friends, who were more alarmed than himself, he quitted the street and went into a house to preach. "During all this," he says, "I was happy in my soul, and full of power and courage; my voice being lifted up like a trumpet, so that the people could hear in spite of all the disturbance that was made at the door and window, which was broken to pieces by the mob." He continued his discourse for some time; but when the mob, who had been preparing themselves by excessive drinking, came among the congregation, a friend desired him to stop. He retired to an upper room; but the rioters, instead of withdrawing, appeared to be more enraged. Some surrounded the house, while others climbed to the top of it, threatening him with death as soon as he should appear. As night drew on he thought it his duty to go out among them, committing himself to the care of God; but as soon as he left the house one of the rioters seized him by the neckerchief; it gave way, and he was thus prevented from falling to the ground. Another hit him on the face, while others flung stones and dirt at him. "I then," he writes, "thought it was my lot to die Stephen's death in the midst of them. I spoke to them, and prayed for them. They still inhumanly continued to beat me with sticks and staves, and to pelt me with stones, until I fell under their merciless feet, where they continued to beat me until the Lord touched the heart of one of them with pity, or fear of being prosecuted for

killing me. He swore that they should beat me no more, and rescued me out of their hands, while they were employed in giving my friends the like treatment. Although they were able to make effectual resistance, they imitated Christ the Lord in bearing all patiently, as I desired them to do. So at last we came together to our lodging, and dressed our wounds; and there also I exhorted my fellow-sufferers; and we rejoiced together that we were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake."

On the following Sunday he stood in a church in Carnarvonshire, and heard himself denounced, in a sermon preached by the "Chancellor," as a minister of the devil, an enemy to God, to the Church, and to all mankind. The enraged Churchman called upon the people "to join unanimously against such a man;" the people obeyed their teacher, and as Harris passed from the church for his horse many stones were flung at him; "but," he writes, "the Lord saved me from receiving any considerable harm, and kept them from laying violent hands upon me. Thus I was greatly endangered all this week, and often thought that I should not be permitted to return alive from this county."

He frequently passed over the line into England, where similar trials beset him. While preaching at Swindon, with Cennick, they were assailed by the mob, who "went the length of their chain" in venting their rage upon him. They brought horns, guns, and a fire-engine. "When they presented a gun to my forehead," he says, "my soul was happy; I could cheerfully stand as a mark for them." A ruffian struck him on his mouth till the blood came; but God was pleased to endow him with uncommon patience and meekness, and "great power to speak to the people, and many listened with great seriousness." After the sermon the itinerants walked up into the town, exhorting those who opposed them, though smeared with mire, gunpowder, and the muddy water thrown by the engine. They were followed by a wondering concourse of poor husbandmen and mechanics; and when they had borrowed a change of clothes, and had washed themselves,

Harris again came forth and preached to the crowds who lingered in the yard of the house where he was entertained. Such was the spirit of this extraordinary man; and it was what the times required. His renewed appeal had immediate effect. "I am persuaded," he says, "that some of them were convinced of sin; and they begged us earnestly to come to a village about a mile distant, which we promised if God would so permit. Then we went to that village, where the word of God runs and is glorified."

We could not estimate aright those times, or the blessings which we owe to Methodism, or the men to whose heroism and labors we are indebted for it, without a record of such facts. It required hardly less fortitude, perhaps more, to pass unquailingly through such scenes, than it did for the ancient Christians to face the horrors of the Colosseum. Troops on the battle-field know no equal tests of courage.[13]

The moral strength of the suffering evangelist grew under his trials. "O what experience," he exclaims sublimely, "I gained by this perilous journey! The Lord by degrees continued to show me more of the height, depth, length, and breadth of his love in Christ; and led me to know, by experience, more of his sufferings, death, and resurrection, love, and faithfulness. . . . The cross was burdensome to my flesh; but I felt my soul growing sweetly under it. . . . My faith and love increased more and more in beholding the glory of the God-Man, whom I now beheld clearly the wonder of all worlds, the terror of devils, the delight of angels, and the real and only hope of poor sinners."

[13] "It was by field-preaching, and in no other possible way, that England could be aroused from its spiritual slumber, or Methodism spread over the country, and rooted where it spread. The men who commenced and achieved this arduous service, and they were scholars and gentlemen, displayed a courage far surpassing that which carries the soldier through the hail-storm of the battle-field. Ten thousand might more easily be found who would confront a battery, than two who, with the sensitiveness of education about them, could mount a table by the roadside, give out a psalm, and gather a mob." Isaac Taylor's Wesley and Methodism, p. 41.

By such labors and sufferings did the Welsh apostle and his co-laborers wake up the whole Principality, renovate its Nonconformity, rouse into life the dead Establishment within it, and spread living piety among its towns and villages. A Churchman of our day, pleading for the return of the Welsh Methodists to the Establishment, acknowledges that "if their object was to awaken, the Church has been thoroughly awakened; if to reform, it is, in great measure at least, reformed."[14]

Not until his own labors and those of Jones, Rowlands, Davies, and the Whitefield and Wesleyan itinerants, had, to a great extent, reclaimed the Christianity of his country, did Harris cease to traverse its mountains and valleys, and to confront the mobs of its demoralized populace. It must be remembered that he was a layman, having never received orders in the Church, (to which, like Wesley, he was faithful to the end,) or license from any of the Dissenters. He was known by the title of Howell Harris, Esq.; so his memoirs call him, and so he is named on his tombstone at Trevecca; a lay evangelist, a memorable example for such through all coming time. When Methodism had become established, and organized more or less, throughout Wales, and its regular laborers were abroad, generally, in its towns and villages, and his own health had failed, Harris located himself at Trevecca, where his home became a sort of Moravian community, thronged with devout inmates, and the head-quarters of a powerful religious influence, which went forth into most of the country. We get occasional glimpses of the domicile and its holy life, its charities and local labors, in the Methodist writings of the times; but never without an eager interest for fuller information. Wesley, pursuing his itinerant ministration in Wales, pauses at it occasionally with pleasure. "Howell Harris's house," he says, "is one of the most elegant places which I have seen in Wales. The little chapel, and all things round about it, are finished with an uncommon taste; and

[14] Article on Methodism in Wales, Quarterly Review, (London,) 1849.

the gardens, orchards, fish-ponds, and mount adjoining, make the place a little paradise. He thanks God for these things, and looks through them. About six score persons are now in the family, all diligent, all constantly employed, all fearing God and working righteousness."[15] And at another visit he writes: "In the evening several of us retired into the neighboring wood, which is exceeding pleasantly laid out in walks, one of which leads to a little mount, raised in the midst of a meadow, that commands a delightful prospect. This is Howell Harris's work, who has likewise greatly enlarged and beautified his house; so that, with the gardens, orchards, walks, and pieces of water that surround it, it is a kind of little paradise." Wesley's piety never perverted his taste; the comforts and even the pleasures of life were ever beautiful to him when they were consecrated by "prayer and thanksgiving."

Harris's Trevecca home became a sort of Mount Zion to Wales, "beautiful for situation." Many of his religious friends and converts resorted to it, and joined their resources and labors with his to sustain the common household. He preached to them daily, sometimes when he was not able to move from the chair from which he addressed them. A "great number of people flocked to him from all parts, many of them, under conviction, merely to hear the word, and others partly from curiosity; the report of his preaching daily at Trevecca having spread throughout Wales."[16] He soon had a hundred resident under his roof; the men working on two hired farms, the women spinning wool and attending to the domestic cares, and he preaching to them every morning as soon as the family arose. Good men often sent him donations of ten, twenty, and a hundred pounds for the expenses of the establishment. Many families settled on farms in the neighborhood to enjoy its religious advantages. Several evangelical laborers, exhorters or lay preachers, were raised up in the family, and went

[15] Wesley's Works, vol. iv, p. 156.
[16] Harris's Life, Jackson's Chr. Biog., vol. xii, p. 61.

forth continually proclaiming the truth in the adjacent villages. Many went up, from the domestic sanctuary, rejoicing, to the "building of God, eternal in the heavens;" "praising," says one of the inmates, "and testifying of Jesus, how dear and precious he was to them in their dying moments; that they beheld eternity bright and glorious before them, through the blood of Christ; blessing him for his love and grace, and for having brought them to Trevecca, where they found edification for their souls. This afforded much comfort and joy to them that were yet left in this vale of misery, seeing their dear brethren and sisters depart, strong in faith, to their eternal home."

The experiment was perilous; yet no evil, but much good, seems to have resulted from it. Socialistic schemes are never successful, except when conducted on theocratic principles; but Harris was a high priest among his followers, and was reverently obeyed in all things.

The staunch old Puritan spirit lingered, and still lingers, among the mountains of Wales. Methodism itself never favored Quakerism on the question of war. Wesley, as we have seen, recommended his people to study the military exercise, and offered to raise Methodist troops for the government, when his country was threatened with invasion by Papal powers. The sword, though so fearfully abused, he deemed the last right of the people for the defense of their liberties and faith. Harris shared these sentiments, and when the Protestantism of the realm was menaced by a threatened invasion from France, "he laid this matter before the family, especially the young men, inquiring whether or not any of them had a willing mind and spirit to go into the service of the king against popery; entreating them to be earnest with the Lord in prayer for his aid and defense at this critical juncture." Soon after he had made the proposition, many of them answered that they were willing and ready; and it was then settled that five young men should go into the army. "They went in faith, and in the strength of the Lord, willing to lay down their

lives for the liberty of the Gospel." These five young Methodists showed that they possessed the spirit which Haime, Staniforth, Bond, and their religious comrades, had so heroically exhibited at Fontenoy. They went from Trevecca, attended with the prayers of their brethren, to Hereford, where they entered a regiment, as Christian patriots. They were sent to Ireland, and thence to Nova Scotia. They fought at the siege of Louisburgh, where they joined the Puritan troops of Boston, who bore on their flag the inscription, *Nil desperandum, Christo duce*—"Fear nothing while Christ is Captain"—given to them by Whitefield. They were with Wolfe at the taking of Quebec, by which English Protestantism took possession of the North. Sailing to the south they helped to take Havana from the Spaniards—the last blow in that important war. One of their brethren at Trevecca piously remarks: "The Lord Jesus was with their spirits in a surprising manner. They kept close together in watching and prayer, reading the Bible, exhorting one another and their fellow-soldiers. They wrote home from Quebec, that they had the spirit of prayer and reliance on the Lord, even in the heat of the battles; because, said they, 'We are in his care, and entered upon this way of life for him, fighting against popery, in defense of our Gospel privileges.' Thus they were kept by our Saviour, contented and happy in their spirits, and in their bodies also, not receiving any material hurt."

The devout household, praying constantly for their absent brethren, were one day surprised by the arrival of one of them, after seven years' absence and perils. He came alone, for the rest were not, the Lord having taken them; "but," says the family chronicler, "he was gladly received by all, as it was a matter of great joy to see him, more especially as the Lord's presence had been with him, keeping him, not only from the vice and wickedness which most commonly prevail in the army, but also in the way to heaven, growing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He brought a most pleasing account of them that

finished their course, and of the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus to himself and to them in all their trials." None of his comrades had fallen in battle; two of them died and were buried at Halifax, "very happy in their spirits, believ ing and testifying of the Lord Jesus that he is faithful to his promise;" the third died at sea, the fourth at Havana. The survivor had been taken a prisoner to France, but on the declaration of peace reached England, where his services were appreciated and preferment offered him; but "he chose rather to come home, so he came directly to Trevecca."[17]

After these young men had gone forth from Trevecca to serve their country, the Welsh if not the Christian spirit of Harris himself, was roused by new alarms of an invasion from France. Being a layman, gentlemen of his county, who knew his courage and his influence, proffered him a commission. He considered it entirely from a Christian point of view. He submitted the proposal to his large family, and after much prayer they bade him go, and commended him to God. Twenty-four men of the household went with him; twelve of them at his own expense for three years. He had stipulated that he must be allowed to preach the Gospel among the troops wherever he should go. This conceded, he marched with his brethren, being made an ensign, and soon after a captain. "I am," he wrote, in a strain which would have delighted Cromwell, "resolutely and coolly determined to go freely and conscientiously, and die in the field of battle in defense of the precious word of God, the Bible, against Popery. Who can sufficiently set forth the value of a book wherein God speaks? and that to all ranks, degrees, ages, and languages of men. Who can set it forth in its own majesty and glory? O the infinite and unfathomable depth of glory, and divine wisdom, and love in it!

[17] "He is still alive," says a writer in 1791, "and continues an honest, faithful servant in the house of God; and has much to speak, as an exhorter, about the grace of the good Shepherd of Israel. He carries a musket-ball in his leg, yet he is very happy and contented; a living witness of the Lord's faithfulness and love." Harris's Life, Jackson's Chr. Biog., vol. xii, p. 168.

A book which he has made the standard and rule to try even his own work by; whereby all spirits, doctrine, ministry, and Church discipline, all faith, love, truth, and obedience are proved; a book that God has referred all men to, from the monarch to the peasant, and has made the universal teacher of men. Here is the seed whence the Church and her faith are begotten; and herein is she purified and nursed; here is the believer's armory; herein is the true, ineffable light of the world. O that its glory may fill this nation! No wonder so many thousands have triumphed in dying for the precious Bible. Now I go freely, without compul sion, to show the regard I have for the privileges we enjoy under our best of kings, our ineffable privileges, especially the precious Gospel of our Saviour, contained in the book of God, which now is openly read throughout the kingdom I commit my family to the Lord, and am going, with a part of it, (who freely offer their lives on this occasion,) to defend our nation and privileges; and to show publicly that we are dead to all things here below, or, at least, that we can part with all for the sake of our Lord and Saviour, even with life itself; and that we seek a city above.'" Men of such a spirit could not fail to be heroes.

He spent three years marching about the kingdom with his regiment, and preaching continually in his regimentals. Wesley and other Methodist itinerants, as they met him on their routes, were welcomed by him, and addressed his men. His character as an officer enabled him to preach with less molestation from the mob than he would have encountered without that distinction; and he was successful, with the aid of his Methodist troops, in introduciug Methodism into places where it had been hitherto successfully repelled by persecution. A remarkable example is recorded by a contemporary Wesleyan preacher.[18] On the arrival of his regiment at Yarmouth he immediately inquired if there were any Methodists in the town, and was informed that attempts had been made by them to preach there, but that the itiner-

[18] Rev. James Wood in Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1825, p. 308.

ants had very narrowly escaped violent deaths from the enraged populace. Nothing daunted by this intelligence, he employed the town-crier to give notice, that on a given day and hour a Methodist would preach at the Market-place. At the time appointed a large mob collected, furnished with stones, brickbats, bludgeons, blood, and filth, vowing that if the preacher came he should never depart alive. Harris, who had been exercising his men at a little distance, went to the multitude, when the clock struck, and inquired what was the matter. They replied that a Methodist preacher was to have come, but it was well that he had not, for he certainly would have been killed. He told them he thought it a pity they should be wholly disappointed, and that if they would favor him with their attention he would sing a hymn, and pray with them, and also give them a little friendly advice. He then mounted a table which had been prepared for him; his men, who surrounded him with their arms, joining him most devoutly in singing and prayer. The novelty of the scene, and the presence of armed troops, who were ready to defend their officer and their friend, struck terror into the mob, and prevented the execution of their design. Harris preached with his usual power; many of his hearers were visibly affected; "prejudices vanished, and some were awakened to a serious concern for their souls, and led to inquire how they might be saved." From that time he preached nearly every evening with increasing effect, and afterward sent to the itinerants in the neighborhood to come to Yarmouth and form a society. His request was readily met, and a zealous Church was formed. A commodious chapel was built by a gentleman of the town, and let to them at a yearly rent, and two local preachers were raised up. "The word of God had free course; it ran and was glorified." Wesley visited them, and, after severe struggles, during which the society seemed repeatedly on the brink of destruction, Methodism was established in the town, never, it is hoped, to be overthrown.

At the end of the war Harris retired to his domestic sanc-

tuary at Trevecca, where a hundred and twenty inmates had maintained the daily preaching and other meetings, and "the outward affairs of the family had gone on regularly at the same time." Besides the charge of his numerous household, he was incessantly devoted to the welfare of Lady Huntingdon's college at Trevecca. We have seen him prominent in its anniversary jubilees.

His health at last declined rapidly, and the decease of some of his old fellow-laborers and fellow-sufferers in the Gospel admonished him that he too must depart hence. The news of Whitefield's death enforced the warning. The same year also died his faithful Welsh coadjutor, Howell Davies.[19] Davies was, like Jones, Rowlands, and Harris, a good Churchman, but entered with his might into the Methodistic movement, preaching not only in Wales, but in Lady Huntingdon's chapels in England.[20] He was educated by Jones, who died some nine years before him, but not without having been instrumental in teaching one hundred and fifty thousand Welshmen to read the Scriptures, during his lifetime, by his itinerant schools. Davies was ever faithful to his training. His first church was in Pembrokeshire, but his Methodism was offensive to the formalism of his parishioners, and he was soon turned out. He became rector of Prengast, where he preached in four different places statedly, besides daily labors in fields, on mountain sides, in barns, and private houses. He had more than two thousand communicants, and it is said that his church had often to be emptied twice to make way for a third congregation to receive the Lord's Supper from his hands. His name is of continual recurrence in the contemporary Methodist writings, for he was a tireless laborer, a "burning and a shining light."[21]

[19] Evangelical Magazine for 1814.

[20] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, *passim*.

[21] He had to struggle with poverty as with persecution. As he was walking early on a Lord's-day to preach, he was accosted on the road by a clergyman on horseback, who was on the same errand, but from a different motive. The latter gentleman was complaining that the drudgery of his profession was unprofitable, for he never could get above half a

Harris now prepared to follow these, his old associates, into the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Through months of agonizing disease he lingered at its gate, longing to enter, but ministering meanwhile sublime words of consolation and exhortation to the brethren he was about to leave. "I find," he said, "the Saviour's will is my heaven, be it what it may; but I have, I think from him, insatiable cries to go home, out of this body, to my Father, Saviour, and Comforter. I feel my spirit eats his words, and I could wash the feet of his servants. My spirit adores him for giving me a hope that I shall come into his presence; that my work is done; that I am at the door; and that I, a poor sinner, that have nothing but sin, should lay hold of his righteousness, and wisdom, and strength, for I have nothing of my own. . . . My spirit is like one at the door, waiting to be called in. I could have no access to ask for anything, but that I may go home, and that he would make haste, and make no long tarrying." And again: "I feel that He, and not anything here, is my rest and happiness. I love eternity, because He is there. I speak with and cry to him. O the thickness of this flesh which hides him from me! O Thou who didst bleed to death, and who art alive, come and take me home. I feel that my spirit goes to God, not as his creature, but as his child, and the purchase of his blood. My Saviour did shine on me sweetly this afternoon. O let me eat no more of the bread that perisheth; be thou to me, from henceforth, my bread and food forever! Be thou to me my sun, and let me see this no more! O hear the cries of thy poor worm! thy blood

guinea for preaching. The earnest Welshman replied that he preached for a crown. The hireling retorted and said, "You are a disgrace to the cloth." "Perhaps," said Davies, "I shall be held in greater disgrace, in your estimation, when I inform you that I am now going nine miles to preach, and have but sevenpence in my pocket to bear my expenses out and in, and do not expect the poor pittance remitted that I am now in possession of. But I look forward for that *crown of glory* which my Lord and Saviour will freely bestow upon me when he makes his appearance before an assembled world." Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. i, chap. 27.

has done the work; take me from this body of clay, for I am here in prison. O take me there, where thou showest thy glory; and indulge a worm, sick of love, longing to come home! This is following Jesus. We are come to Mount Sion, and I am on Mount Sion; I saw great glory before in that God-Man Jesus, but nothing compared with what I now behold in him!" When he was in the greatest pain, he often cried out, "O this cup! Blessed be God for this last cup! Jesus drank it all for me. I shall soon be with that God who died for me, to save me to all eternity." On the ceiling of his chamber was inscribed, in gilt letters, the Hebrew name of God—the ineffable name; it flashed upon his dying gaze.[22] "Thus," says one who stood by his bedside, "he went home to rest in the Lord, July 21st, 1773, in the sixtieth year of his age."

"Mr. Harris," wrote Lady Huntingdon to Romaine, "has gone home in triumph." A grand scene was presented, in Trevecca, at his funeral, such as no jubilee of the college had ever witnessed. The news of his death sped rapidly over the country, and thousands of pilgrims wended their way to the consecrated place, praying, weeping, and also rejoicing, for their great apostle had fought a good fight, and had left them with the crown of glory upon his brow. The day of his interment, says the countess, "was one never to be forgotten, and ought to be remembered with holy wonder and gratitude, for the special seasons of divine influence" which attended it. The town was filled. Twenty thousand people were present, and preachers and exhorters flocked to the solemn ceremony from all directions. Three stages were erected in the open air, and nine sermons delivered from them to the vast multitudes, hundreds of whom were dissolved in tears. Fifteen clergymen were present, six of whom, says the countess, in characteristic style, "blew the Gospel trumpet with great power and freedom. Though we had enjoyed much of the gracious presence of God in our assemblies be-

[22] The chamber and its inscription are still preserved intact, and visited by many pilgrims.

fore, yet I think I never saw so much at any time as on that day; the Lord's Supper was administered, and God poured out his Spirit in a wonderful manner. . . Many old Christians told me they had never seen so much of the glory of the Lord and the riches of his grace, nor felt so much of the power of the Gospel before." It seemed a spiritual festival, and the weeping yet exulting thousands bore the warrior to his grave in triumph.

A memorable sentence, which justifies the detail with which his life has been treated in our pages, is inscribed on his tombstone at Trevecca: "He was the first itinerant preacher of redemption in this period of revival in England and Wales." He had preached thirty-nine years, and began his out-door labors before Whitefield stood upon Mount Hannam. Whitefield, immediately after he took the open field at Kingswood, passed, as we have seen, into Wales, where he found Harris preaching at large, and brought him into alliance with the Methodistic movement.[23]

And thus one after another of these wonderful men passed away, with deaths as sublime as their lives were alleged to be fanatical. And "their works do follow them!" Wales witnesses to-day, in all her towns and villages, to the usefulness of their labors and sufferings. We have already noticed, with some minuteness, the religious results of their ministrations.[24] A hostile authority has acknowledged that the public character of the Principality has been changed by them; that even an extraordinary impulse has been given to a purely native school of thought and literature; that not only numerous editions of the Bible, concordances, hymn-books, and tracts of a missionary nature, but newspapers, magazines, and treatises on popular topics, such as geography and agriculture, stream yearly from the Welsh press; that those who imagine the Welsh intellect asleep, or the language inoperative as a medium of instruction, have still to read a chapter in contemporary history; that "this influx of fresh thought is even

[23] See their first interview, vol. i, book ii, chap. 1.
[24] Vol. i, book ii, chap. 1, and book iv, chap. 7.

expanding the language, which is evidently growing and enriched daily by the formation of self-evolved words, especially such as denote abstraction and generalization."[25]

Mighty men still survived in Wales to prosecute the reformation, and mightiest among them was Daniel Rowlands, rector of Llangeitho, and chaplain to the Duke of Leinster. He began his "irregular" labors almost as early as Howell Harris, and has been pronounced his "twin founder of Welsh Methodism;" he "did for Wales whatever Whitefield did for England, and perhaps something more."[26] He had entered the ministry of the Establishment a godless man, and, being gigantic in body, he descended from the pulpit to excel in the Sunday athletic games of his parishioners. Griffith Jones crossed his path. Rowlands went to hear him, through curiosity, mixed with scorn; his biographers describe him as standing before the preacher, in front of the pulpit, with a look of disdain, which soon changed to seriousness, and at last to penitence; and the old evangelist saw in him "already an Elisha who, he prayed, might be destined to succeed him." He now became a changed man; his preaching became more powerful than that of his teacher; it is described as like "thunder" among the Welsh mountains. The worst men were struck under it, as he himself had been by the word of Jones; and we "soon hear of an ungodly squire, who came with hounds and huntsmen to church, undergoing the same conversion as he had himself experienced, during a single sermon." A devout woman, who went twenty miles to hear him, induced him to extend his labors, at first in churches, wherever he could obtain permission, and when this was refused, in private houses. Persecution was roused against him in his parish, and a rival assembly, of foot-ball players and wrestlers, was attempted; it was an important event in his history, for he went forth and courageously confronted them, and thus began his open air preaching, which he maintained during

[25] Quarterly Review, (London,) 1849; Art., Methodism in Wales.
[26] Ibid.

quarter of a century, "thundering" continually among the Welsh hills. Jones, Harris, Whitefield and Wesley soon recognized him, and he, too, became known as one of the Methodists who were "turning the world upside down." He made frequent detours through the mountainous regions of Wales and into England, preaching in the Methodist chapels and in the open air, but meantime served, with a salary of ten pounds a year, his two churches, and occasionally a third. They were crowded, aisles, porticoes, and yards. Multitudes followed him from one town to another, not returning home till late in the night, or the next morning, and often without eating anything from Sunday morning till Monday, for the small villages could not supply food for the vast gatherings.[27] His overwhelming eloquence kindled the fervid Welsh with enthusiasm, and those ardent "shoutings" which have attended Methodism in all parts of the world, broke spontaneously from the assembled thousands who wept around him. Even in repeating the Church service—"By thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion"—tears and convulsive sobs, followed by cries of *Gogoniant*, (Glory!) and *Bendigedi*, (Blessed!) broke out and ran through the multitude like a contagious fever. The devout reader of the Methodist correspondence of those times catches and kindles with the exultant spirit of these suffering but faithful men. One of them, writing to the Countess of Huntingdon respecting the preaching of Rowlands, says: "He spoke wonderfully on Abraham *looking up*, Gen. xxii, 13. I never heard such a sermon before. Surely he is the greatest preacher in Europe. May the Lord own him more and more! The place rang with *Gogoniant*. Ride on, blessed Jesus, triumphantly through our land. Fill our cold hearts with thy love, then we shall praise thee from shore to shore. . . . Some of the people made our little town ring with *Gogoniant i Fab Dafydd. Hosanna trwy'r*

[27] Hanes Bywyd Daniel Rowlands. Gan y Parchedig, John Owen. Life of Daniel Rowlands, by Rev. J. Owen, p. 24. Caerleon, 1839.

ne foedd. Hosanna hefyd trwy'r Dœar, Dœar. Amen, Amen. Glory be to the Son of David! Hosanna through the heavens! Hosanna also through the earth! Amen, Amen."[28] Though the Welsh revival had hitherto been prosecuted mostly by Churchmen, this habit of "shouting" seems to have generally prevailed, and not only in the field assemblies but in the dying hours of the Welsh Methodists. Wesley's itinerants, toiling and nearly perishing among the wintry storms of the Cimbrian hills, were inspirited for their heroic labors by the ardor of Rowlands' converts. One of these "helpers," after passing through incredible hardships, relates with thankfulness an affecting example which fired his soul with courage to suffer on even unto death if required. Six or seven persons belonging to one of Rowlands' societies were assembled for prayer, in a house by the side of a river, after a great storm. Suddenly the stream rose and overflowed its banks. The house was built of timber, and was soon swept away, with all who were in it. A young man got upon the top of the brick chimney. The neighbors, seeing him in this situation, came to the water-side; but, having no boat, they could afford him no relief. Though there was nothing before him but certain death, for the waters were rising overwhelmingly, he continued singing and shouting in Welsh, with all his might, "*Gogoniant! Gogoniant!*" "Glory! Glory!" till a wreck of a bridge struck against the building, and dashed it to pieces. "He fell into the water, and followed his companions into a blessed eternity. But before he fell he cried to the people on the shore that all his companions within went off praising God in like manner."[29]

Rowlands' irregular labors provoked warnings from his bishop, and at last his license was revoked; but he went forth over the land with only the more zeal. And now, says a Churchman, "From every part of Wales—from the mouth of the Wye up to the Dovey and the Conway—

[28] Letter of Rev. David Jones, Life of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 32.
[29] Life of John Prickard, in "Lives of Early Methodist Preachers," vol. ii.

people flocked, like the Israelites to Jerusalem, in order to hear the eloquence, and receive the sacrament from the hands of one who had acquired the dignity of a martyr. The appearance of mountain valleys, threaded by vast numbers of simple people from afar, is described as most picturesque and affecting. These multitudes, hungry and thirsty, their souls fainting on the way, were refreshed by the glad tidings which they heard, and the usual organization of Methodism followed."[30]

Rowlands survived Harris about twenty years, and conducted the revival with unflagging energy. Charles, of Bala, survived him still longer, and gave to "Calvinistic Methodism" the ecclesiastical organization which has preserved it among his countrymen from that absorption by which it has almost disappeared in England. He too was a Churchman, but could find no sanction for his "irregular" labors from his ecclesiastical superiors. "Being turned out," he says, "of three churches in this country, without prospect of another, what shall I do?" But God showed him what to do; at a later date, after the Establishment learned to appreciate him, he could write: "I might have been preferred in the Church; it has been repeatedly offered me; but I really would rather have spent the last twenty-three years of my life as I have, wandering up and down our cold and barren country, than to have been made an archbishop. It was no choice of mine; it was Providence that led me to it." He became an archbishop to Wales, in the best sense, and with the best honor of the title. The phrase, "Calvinistic Methodists," survives as a denominational title in Wales alone; it is the legal style of the strongest form of Dissent in the Principality; and all Wales is dotted with the chapels of societies which justly boast of Jones, Harris, Rowlands, Davies, and Charles, as their founders. They supplied the cottages of their country with the word of God, and by the demand which they excited for the Bible, led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, by which, and its noble

[30] Quarterly Review, (London.) 1849; Art., Methodism in Wales.

offspring, the American Bible Society, their sound has gone out into all the world.

Such are our final notices of Calvinistic Methodism in America and in Wales; of its further history in England we must be content with few and rapid outlines. Romaine, Venn, Berridge, and their associates continued to prosecute the revival in different parts of the kingdom, as well as in their own parishes, and new laborers were continually joining them, some from the Trevecca college, some in the Dissenting pulpits, and others in the Establishment. As Calvinistic Methodism had scarcely any organized form, the relation of these evangelists to each other, and to the Countess of Huntingdon, was more of a moral than of an ecclesiastical character; they bore, however, in common, the reproach and title of Methodists, were bound together in sympathy and labors as such, and the Calvinistic work of Methodism moved on in unity under their harmonious co-operation.

In 1775 the countess made an excursion into Cornwall, where Wesley and his helpers had been breaking up the fallow ground with great success for many years. Her influence was useful, not only among the Dissenters, but among the Calvinistic Churchmen of that region, and in a few years twenty congregations were gathered into her Connection, chiefly by the labors of her students. The venerable Walker of Truro, whose name so frequently appears in the early Methodist records, had labored for the promotion of genuine religion in the county; but his close adherence to the Church limited his usefulness. His congregation suffered by the less evangelical ministry of his successors; but a large portion of them found shelter under the ministration of the preachers of Lady Huntingdon, and formed at last a Dissenting Church, converting a building which had been used for fifty years as a cock-pit, into a chapel, and subsequently erecting a commodious edifice for a second congregation.[3]

[3] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 40. After the years of persecution and success of Wesley in St. Ives, we are surprised

Thence her Connection spread out, more or less, through the West of England.

Meanwhile De Courcy had been presented to the curacy of St. Alhmond's, and now made it a center of evangelization, as Grimshaw had made Haworth, and Berridge, Everton. It is evident, from what has already been said of him, that this zealous Churchman had within him the genuine energy for a Methodistic propagandist. He preached with undaunted courage and powerful effect, not only in Lady Huntingdon's chapels, but in the open air. He wrote to the countess, from the midst of mobs, to express his gratitude to the Lord for placing him under her ladyship's protection, and records some of his preaching "adventures" in Sussex. At one place (Hurst) he says the whole town was in commotion, as if invaded by a foreign enemy, as soon as he and his companions appeared in the streets. It was with much difficulty he could get a chair to stand on. As he proceeded in his discourse some laughed, some shouted, others brought out a table with liquor, and began to sing round it, while others blew a horn: and while he invited the multitude to drink "freely of the water of life," a jocose rioter came to him with a mug of ale in his hand, begging he would drink with him. "In the midst of all this," he says, "the Lord made me as bold as a lion, so that I was enabled to bear an awful testimony against these scoffers, and had the pleasure to see many of them so far cut down by the word that they were silent for some time. Notwithstanding the tumult, many were deeply attentive and much affected; and I have since heard that a man in the town has made an offer of any part of his house for us to meet in whenever we go there again." At Laughton he stood up under a venerable tree and preached: "We stood," he says, "on an eminence, and made the hills and vales re-echo with the praises of the Lamb. It was a

to read in this author that "the Gospel was" now "first introduced into St. Ives by the ministers and students of Lady Huntingdon." Her preachers would not have tolerated such bigotry even in the height of the Calvinistic controversy.

blessed season. Many were much affected, and after I had concluded, begged hard for one sermon more. I have given them a promise, and hope soon to fulfill it, for I long once more to stand under that same tree. The work in Sussex calls aloud for more laborers. It is impossible for me to give your ladyship any idea of the universal thirst there is for the Gospel, on every side of us, in the country parts. . . . Sussex," he adds, "seems to be on fire: and though the devil strives to extinguish the sacred flame, yet, glory be to God! it receives additional strength from every fresh flood poured on it, and burns the brighter. The Lord is reviving his work in the hearts of some here who have lost ground; he blesses us in every meeting. Yesterday was one of the days of the Son of Man. Oathall Church was as full as it could hold, and the Lord was in the midst of us. The word was as a fire. I preached at eight in the morning five miles from Oathall; at eleven, at Oathall; at six, at Brighthelmston; and the Lord gave me such strength of body and spirit that he enabled me to go through the whole like a giant refreshed with new wine."

It was in 1774 that he obtained the vicarage of St. Alhmond's, and immediately his labors spread a sensation throughout his parish and its vicinity. He was attacked in a sarcastic poem, entitled, "St. Alhmond's Ghost;" the Anti-pedobaptists took offense at his preaching, and kept him busy with a controversy during several years. He was noted for his pulpit oratory, as well as his irregular labors; his language is said to have been polished, his elocution graceful, his manner dignified, and his discourses presented "some of the most finished examples of sacred eloquence."[32]

One of the most notable men of the Establishment in the last century became associated with Calvinistic Methodism about this period. He had been a sailor before the mast, and, on becoming captain of a vessel, prosecuted several voyages in the slave-trade, plunged into almost every enormity, and was the last man that the most hopeful charity

[32] Jones's Christian Biography.

would have supposed could ever be reclaimed, much less become a bright and shining light in the English pulpit. "There goes John Newton, had it not been for the grace of God," he exclaimed to a friend, as, in later life, they passed a criminal on his way to execution. During the worst of his excesses, however, Newton could not silence the admonitions of his conscience; he abandoned the seas, began an indefatigable course of self-education, and though he was but two years at school in all his life, he acquired a knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, and became a well-informed theologian. He applied for orders in the Church, but was refused by the Archbishop of York because of his connection with the Methodists in Warwickshire and Yorkshire, where he had labored extensively. He now spent seven or eight years in exhorting, and expounding the Scriptures, wherever he could obtain an opportunity, in Liverpool and its vicinity. He also preached for Grimshaw and Ingham. He at last procured ordination from the Bishop of Lincoln, by the influence of the Methodist peer, Lord Dartmouth, and was presented to a curacy, the name of which, associated with the "Olney Hymns," has become familiar in most of the English world. He received this favor also from the patronage of Dartmouth, to whom he afterward addressed several of the letters of his "Cardiphonia."

About the time of this appointment a young clergyman by the name of Unwin, who, while at Cambridge, had been the friend of Berridge, was introduced to the Countess of Huntingdon, and preached in her chapels at Tunbridge Wells and Bristol. In his father's house at Huntingdon, Cowper, the household poet of English Christianity, had found an asylum. At the death of the elder Unwin, Newton visited and consoled the family in their affliction, and at his instance the widow and Cowper removed to the parish of Olney. There the poet lived with all the reliefs that his mental malady could receive from the pious friendship of the Methodist curate, and the maternal care of the excellent lady, whom he compares to the mother that he had mourned in lines which

few or none have read without tears. Cowper has been legitimately claimed as one of the Methodist Calvinistic Churchmen of that day.[33] He shared the interest of his pastor, Newton, in the Methodistic revival, and Newton introduced his poems to the public; he celebrated the revival in his earliest publication;[34] he defended its chief Calvinistic champion, Whitefield, in verse which will never die, and in an age when the current literature teemed with abuse of the great evangelist, and the drama had turned the laugh of the London theater upon him;[35] he portrayed Wesley in words as truthful as eulogistic;[36] his muse consecrated the example of Lord Dartmouth, the only nobleman who represented Methodism in the court—the "one who wore a coronet and prayed;"[37] he contributed the best hymns in the "Olney Collection," replete with the Methodistic spirit of the times; he was the friend and admirer of Rowland Hill, and aided him in his preparation of his Hymns for Children; he commemorated the charity of Thornton;[38] and has preserved forever the name of Conyers, Lady Huntingdon's friend and correspondent, one of her most zealous co-laborers in Yorkshire, where he preached for Ingham's societies, and in the open air, and was menaced with the threat of having his gown "stripped over his ears" for "preaching his Methodism in the presence of his Grace the Archbishop of York."[39]

[33] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 33.

[34] God gives the word; the preachers throng around;
Live from his lips, they spread the glorious sound;
That sound bespeaks salvation on her way,
The trumpet of a life-restoring day.—Hope 453–456.

[35] In the fine portrait of Leuconomus:
Leuconomus, beneath well-sounding Greek
I slur a name a poet must not speak, etc.—Hope, 554–598.

[36] Beginning:
O I have seen, (nor hope, perhaps in vain,
Ere life go down, to see such sights again,)
A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
Who never saw the sword he dared not wield.—Conversation, 605–624.

[37] Truth, 377–380.

[38] Charity, 244–250, and "Lines in Memory of Thornton."

[39] 'Tis open and ye cannot enter. Why?
Because ye will not, Conyers would reply;

The "Task" has justly been celebrated as marking an era in English poetry, the transition from the poetry of the eighteenth to that of the nineteenth century—the substitution of natural for artificial language, and of familiar, popular themes for such as had been mostly appreciable only to cultivated minds; but it is more important, both historically and morally, as marking the era of the Methodistic resuscitation of religion in England. Both this work and Cowper's earlier large poems are imbued with the new religious sentiments of the times; they abound in Methodistic allusions, and contributed greatly to the restoration of evangelical piety throughout the range of the English language. Though he disguised the name of Whitefield, he did not disguise his principles. He was the first of English poets (not merely hymnists) who tuned the lyre to such sentiments. Milton's cathedral strains had rolled grandly down a hundred years, but they were Hebraic rather than evangelic; Herbert's pious conceits and churchly quaintnesses possessed a peculiar charm, but were become obsolete; Young commanded some respect for religion by his didactic platitudes, and prompted the grand religious genius of Klopstock on the Continent; but Cowper imbued his verse with the essential vitality as well as simplicity of the Gospel, and he was not more the poet of English household life than of English Methodism.

Newton had caught the spirit of Whitefield. "I bless God," he said, "that I have lived in his day." He used to

> And he says much that many may dispute,
> And cavil at with ease, but none refute."—Truth, 357–360.

His Grace the Archbishop "caviled" at Conyers "with ease," but did not refute him, nor stop him. After hearing the sermon referred to in the text, the prelate said to him, "Were you to inculcate the morality of Socrates it would do more good than canting about the new birth," and "walked off without waiting for a reply." Thornton, who was Conyers' brother-in-law, sat by his side at dinner that day, and stealthily taking the sermon from his pocket, published it and scattered it over the kingdom, and thus secured for us the only printed work which we have from the pen of this zealous Methodist Churchman. (Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. i, chap. 17.) It is probable that Cowper's allusion was to this sermon, and the "disputes" and "cavils" it occasioned.

go to hear him, as we have seen, before daylight, when Moorfields was as full of the lanterns of the thronging hearers as Haymarket of flambeaux on opera nights. He corresponded with Wesley. "I know of no one," he wrote to him, from Grimshaw's head-quarters at Haworth, "to whom my heart is more united in affection, nor to whom I owe more as an instrument of divine grace." "I have had the honor," he adds, "to appear as a Methodist preacher." He apologized to Wesley for not devoting himself to the itinerant ministry; he "had not strength of body or mind sufficient to be an itinerant," his "constitution having been broken for several years."[40] But he "loved the people called Methodists, vindicated them from unjust aspersions on all occasions, and suffered the reproach of the world for being one himself."[41]

John Thornton, the distinguished Methodist layman of London, presented him with the living of St. Mary Woolnoth, in the metropolis, where, for about twenty-seven years, he continued, by his writings and his co-operation with Lady Huntingdon, Romaine, Haweis, Hill, Burder, and their associates, to promote the Methodistic revival. He gave to the world a memoir of his friend Grimshaw. He may be considered one of the chief founders of the Low Church party which was now, through the influence of Methodism,[42] rapidly rising in the Establishment, and of the great "Benevolent Enterprises" which, organized in the latter part of his life in London, embodied there the

[40] In his Cardiphonia, he says: "I wish there were more itinerant preachers." He, however, pronounces that mode of ministerial life suited only to men of peculiar qualifications—a good plan for men of "grace and zeal," and of "little fund or talent for a parochial field."

[41] Letter to Wesley, Arminian Magazine, 1780, p. 441.

[42] Dr. Burkhard, who preached in London while Newton lived there, has given a chapter in his *Vollstandige Geschichte der Methodisten*—Complete History of Methodism (Anhang ii,) to this "remarkable man, who from a slave-trader became a Methodist preacher." Newton died in 1807, aged eighty-five. His works comprise eight octavo volumes. "Few theologians of the last century contributed more to the advancement of experimental religion." Jones's Christian Biography.

moral energies of England to be put forth in the ends of the earth.

Calvinistic Methodism had now such representatives in the pulpits of the Establishment and of the Dissenters, in nearly all parts of the country; they were the most popular of the clergy in London; they were multiplying in Ireland, and several chapels, directly or indirectly in connection with the Countess of Huntingdon, had sprung up in Dublin and other parts of the island. In Scotland it was represented by the chapels and chaplains of Lady Glenorchy, the "Lady Huntingdon of Scotland,"[44] a convert of the devoted Jane Hill, an active co-laborer with the countess, and a liberal benefactor of her college at Trevecca. The influence of the countess, with that of Thornton and Lord Dartmouth, procured ordination and livings for many of the students of Trevecca. Many of them were also appointed to the pulpits of the Nonconformists, and all of them preserved some effective though undefined relation to their patroness. The very vagueness of this relation doubtless enhanced that influence of Calvinistic Methodism among Churchmen and Dissenters, which we have considered as its providential work, and which would probably have been interrupted by any attempt at more restricted or more exact terms of co-operation. But its uncertainty must have occasioned frequent anxiety to the Calvinistic leaders, for events which might suddenly embarrass or arrest it were becoming imminent. The countess was aged; her capacity for her great responsibilities might fail; her death was a daily contingency, and no definitive plan for the continuance of her system of evangelization had been provided, nor indeed could now be provided without hazardous disputes. Wesley's superior legislative genius had anticipated any similar peril to Arminian Methodism; but Calvinistic Methodism needed no such security for what we have ventured to pronounce its providential designation.

[44] Lady Huntingdon Portrayed, chap. 6. New York, 1857.

An entirely unexpected event precipitated its inevitable crisis. In a morally desolate part of the north of London stood an edifice, called the Pantheon, which had been devoted to Sunday amusements. The countess obtained it in 1779, and opened it for public worship. Hitherto her societies had suffered little interference from the ecclesiastical laws, though they were unquestionably against such organizations within existing parishes. As her chapels were not designed to be Dissenting places of worship, they were supposed to be legally held as chaplaincies in her right as a peeress of the realm. The clergyman within whose parish the Pantheon was situated interfered, and claimed authority to control it, to preach in it if he pleased, and to use the moneys received from its sacraments and pews. An appeal was made to the law, and the legal authorities sustained him, though the statute on the question was virtually obsolete. Thornton and Lord Dartmouth counseled and sustained the countess, but verdicts were given in the ecclesiastical courts by which Haweis and Glascott, two of her chaplains, were prohibited from officiating in the new chapel. The decision affected not only this case, but applied equally *to all her other places of worship.* There was but one practicable course for her—to take shelter under the Toleration Act, and turn them all into Dissenting chapels, a measure which must seriously affect her relations to the evangelical Churchmen who had hitherto co-operated with her. "I am reduced," wrote the afflicted countess, who faithfully loved the Church, "I am reduced to turn the finest congregation, not only in England but in any part of the world, into a Dissenting meeting-house!" "I am to be cast out of the Church now, *only for what I have been doing these forty years—speaking and living for Jesus Christ.*"

The die was cast, and Calvinistic Methodism, as represented by "Lady Huntingdon's Connection," was thrust out of the Church, and took its position among the Dissenters. Thus did the Establishment continue to drive from its ranks the evangelists who were restoring the power and redeeming the honor of Christianity in the land.

Some of her clerical preachers formally renounced the Church, particularly Mills and Taylor, who had first preached in the Pantheon. They addressed a solemn "Vindication to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England," and turned their backs indignantly upon it. But most of the regular clergy, who had been the chief co-laborers of the countess, adhered to it, and preached no more in her pulpits; and, after their long and heroic common labors and sufferings, we read in the records of the times, with mingled surprise and sadness, with a sentiment of indignation, not at the men, but at the Church, that Romaine, Venn, Townsend, Jesse, and other veteran Methodists, found it expedient to "withdraw from the service of the countess's Connection," and drop the banners which they had borne so triumphantly, though "irregularly," over the land, and thenceforth confine themselves to their "regular" fields.

It is easy to conjecture what Wesley would have done in similar circumstances. Attached as he was to the Church, and determined never voluntarily to leave it, we know that he was equally determined never to succumb to its prelatical interference with what he deemed his providentially appointed work; that when forbidden at Bristol to preach in that diocese, he answered the episcopal menace by taking his stand on Mount Hannam, within it, and proclaiming his message to the weeping thousands of Kingswood colliers, who crept, unwashed, from their mines to hear him; that in his first Conference, nearly forty years before this intolerant treatment of Lady Huntingdon, he had asked the question, "How far shall we obey the bishops?" and answered it as bravely as wisely, "In all things *indifferent;* observing the canons, as far as we can, with a safe conscience," but no further; that at the next session it was asked, "Is not the will of our governors a law?" and answered with befitting emphasis, "*No!* not of any governor, temporal or spiritual; therefore, if any bishop will that I should not preach the Gospel, *his will is no law to me.*" "But what if he produce a law against your preaching?" "I am to obey God rather than man!"

"Church or no Church," he wrote to his brother, Charles Wesley, "we must save souls;" and "we believe," he declared in his Minutes, "that the Methodists will either be thrust out, or leaven the whole Church." He stood always calmly ready for either alternative. Treated as the Countess of Huntingdon had been by the Consistorial Court of the Bishop of London, Wesley would doubtless have adopted the course which she pursued; but he was too formidable, with his thorough organization, his hundreds of preachers, and thousands of members, for such interference. It would not be expedient to swell the ranks of Dissent by such hosts; the very foundations and buttresses of the Establishment might be shaken by the rash measure, and the mighty man was allowed to proceed, mobbed, satirized, and treated by the ecclesiastical dignitaries with proud but impotent disdain.

Rowland Hill, who had never been fully reconciled to the countess since her alienation from him, now maintained an ambiguous relation to both her Connection and the Church, and became virtually the head of a species of Methodistic "connection" of his own. Some of her societies became "Independent;" the celebrated William Jay, whose writings, rich in evangelical sentiment and in talent, are precious in our religious literature, was settled over one of them, the noted Argyle Chapel, Bath.[45] He had been a pupil of Cornelius Winter, the companion of Whitefield in his last American voyage. Winter sent him out from his school to preach in neighboring villages before he was sixteen years of age, and he became an "open air" evangelist, addressing rustic assemblies, not only in their cottages, but "on the green turf before the door, or on the road, or in a field hard by."[46] Lady Maxwell, an influential Arminian Methodist, and correspondent of Wesley, engaged him to officiate in her chapel at Hotwells, where he labored under her patronage for nearly a year. Tuppen, a preacher in Whitefield's Connection, and afterward minister of the "Tabernacle" at Port-

[45] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 30.

[46] Jay's account of himself in his "Jubilee Address," 1841.

sea, first took charge of the Argyle Chapel, and "with his dying breath" recommended Jay to his people, and Winter delivered the "charge" at his installation. Though the Methodistic relations of Jay became thus modified, they were always cordial, and few men, not recognized as the leaders of the Methodistic revival, have done more to promote it than he, by his catholic spirit, frequent writings and prolonged and saintly life. He co-operated with the Huntingdon Methodists to the last, and lived to preach at the re-opening of the celebrated Tottenham Court Chapel in 1831.[47]

Another step was soon necessary on the part of the countess. Legally recognized now as Dissenters, her preachers could no longer obtain ordination from the bishops. In 1783 they were, for the first time, ordained by their own brethren in her Spafields Chapel, and thus was the breach between her and her former clerical associates impassably widened. They cordially sympathized with her evangelical labors; but the chief of them publicly stood aloof. The veterans among them, who had been her earliest and best dependence, were sinking under the infirmities of age, and if they had been at liberty to co-operate with her, were rapidly becoming disabled for active service. She too was hastening with them to the grave, and in 1791, burdened with eighty-four years, she closed the most remarkable career which is recorded of her sex, in the modern Church, by a death which was crowned with the serenity and hope that befitted a life so devout and beneficent. Through a lingering and painful illness she gave utterance to sentiments, not

[47] This famous chapel is at present one of the most interesting religious monuments in London; its length, one hundred and twenty-seven feet; breadth, seventy; height of its dome, one hundred and fourteen. Its pulpit is the one in which Whitefield preached. It can seat from three to four thousand hearers; its walls are ornamented with tablets to the memory of Whitefield, Captain Joss, Toplady, etc. In its mausoleum are the remains of several preachers, Dissenters and Churchmen. The visitor cannot but regret the absence of Whitefield's bones; it is their appropriate resting-place, and the next centenary of Methodism should not be allowed to pass without their generous surrender by America to England.

merely of resignation, but of rapture. When a blood vessel broke, the presage of her departure, she said: "I am well; all is well—well for ever. I see, wherever I turn my eyes, whether I live or die, nothing but victory. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh! The thought fills my soul with joy unspeakable, my soul is filled with glory; I am as in the element of heaven itself. I am encircled in the arms of love and mercy; I long to be at home; O, I long to be at home!" A little before she died she said repeatedly: "I shall go to my Father this night;" and shortly after: "Can he forget to be gracious? Is there any end of his loving-kindness?" Almost her last words were: "*My work is done; I have nothing to do but to go to my Father.*"[48]

Her character has received the best possible delineation by the record of her works in the preceding pages.[49] She was profoundly devout, as her life and death attested. The German historian of Methodism, who personally knew her, says that "conversing with her you forgot the earldom in her exhibition of humble, loving piety."[50] She was somewhat pertinacious of her opinions; financially she was liberal to excess, as shown by her benefactions, amounting to half a million of dollars, and by the embarrassments which she often suffered from her contributions to the poor. The power with which she swayed so many able men through so many years, is the more remarkable for not having been the result of any official or ecclesiastical prerogative. She resembled Wesley in the tenacity and steadiness with which she prosecuted her long and great work; and perhaps her sex alone deprived her of equal success and eminence.

The interval between her involuntary secession from the national Church and her death, was filled with undiminished labors and scarcely diminished success; and to the last her cause seemed to need only a better organic system to

[48] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 54.
[49] See particularly vol. i, book ii, chap. 4.
[50] Vollstandige Geschichte der Methodisten, etc., vol. ii, app. 1.

perpetuate its energy. She saw this necessity, and in the year preceding her death called together a council of her chief friends to form an "Association for uniting and perpetuating the Connection." A circular was issued to all her societies, presenting a form of organization. Its provisions were minute and judicious; the whole Connection was divided into twenty-three districts; annual and quarterly meetings were to be held; connectional funds to be collected; and especially was it provided that as "the Lord had in the present age blessed itinerant preaching, circuits should be formed, in different parts of the kingdom, for the further spread of the Gospel of Christ, and that preachers should be sent out and supported by the Connection, as collectively considered, so far as the Lord should enable and their finances allow!" It was apparently copied from Wesley's model; but it was too late: governments cannot be suddenly superinduced; they must grow. Questionings, oppositions, menaces of revolt by important societies and men, came back to her in reply to the circular. The aged countess entreated their co-operation in an affecting letter: "I am now," she wrote, "in the eighty-fourth year of my age, and much bodily pain fills the greatest part of my declining and evil days; but you remain, as ever, near and dear to my heart, and will till my last breath ceases to make me an inhabitant of the earth. I have also, with many an aching heart, felt the vast importance to the comfort of you all, how the most faithfully to preserve the pure and blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ among you when I am gone. A variety of ways my many hours of sorrowful prayers and tears have suggested, and the settlement of my best meanings has many times been put in execution. But, alas! where my best confidence has from time to time been placed, the Lord has confounded it." [51]

[51] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii, chap. 54. Whitefield also regretted his neglect of a better organization of his people. Dr. Adam Clarke says: "Mr. Pool was well known to Mr. Whitefield; and having met him one day, he accosted him in the following manner: 'Well, John, art thou still a Wesleyan?' 'Yes, sir; and I thank God that I have the

The scheme failed, and she died, leaving her great work to the care of her devisees, and particularly to the superintendence of Lady Anne Erskine, daughter of Lord Buchan, one of her old and most capable female coadjutors. The lease of Trevecca College having expired, the institution was transferred, the next year after the countess's death, to Cheshunt, about twelve miles from London, where it has continued, with more or less reputation, to our day. The disintegration of Calvinistic Methodism could not but proceed, in the absence of any confederative system. In Wales it became isolated, but powerful by its thorough local organization, and the "result is that, by the blessing of God, the great majority of the religious population of Wales now belong to that denomination." The Whitefield Methodists in England have mostly been absorbed by Congregationalism. Lady Huntingdon's chapels remain, and bear her name, but rank generally with the same class of Christians. They are no longer known by the epithet of Methodist. The rapid growth of the Wesleyan Methodists in numbers and public importance, has gradually led the popular mind to appropriate the title exclusively to them, except in the Principality.

An able writer, himself a member of "Lady Huntingdon's Connection," has attempted to account for the decline of Calvinistic Methodism in England.[52] He ascribes it, in part, to its Calvinistic theology, but more particularly to the localization of the labors of its respective Churches

privilege of being in connection with Mr. Wesley, and one of his preachers.' 'John, thou art in thy right place. My brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labor. This I neglected; and my people are a rope of sand.' And what now remains of this great man's labor? Scarcely anything. Multitudes were converted under his ministry, and are gone to God, but there is no spiritual succession. The Tabernacle near Moorfields, the Tabernacle in Tottenham Court, and one in Bristol, with what is called the Little School in Kingswood, are all even of his places of worship that remain; and these are mere Independent chapels." (Clarke's Miscellaneous Works.) The class-meeting has been the nucleus of Methodism throughout the world.

[52] Introduction, by Rev. J. K. Foster, to the Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii.

by their control in the persons of trustees, rather than in a connectional body, and the consequent decline of "the spirit of zealous itineracy." The comprehensive reason was, doubtless, the lack of an early systematic government, which could grow with its growth, and conserve it against the influence of those accidents which at last determined its fate. But this want we have deemed a providential fact in its history; it accomplished its appointed task, an inestimable work, and if its visible remains as a religious party are not what its adherents may have hoped, its remaining influence on British Christianity is profound, and will be, probably, to the end of time. It revived, as has been shown, the Calvinistic Nonconformity of England, and, in co-operation with the more powerful sway of Arminian Methodism, produced that evangelical or Low Church party which has been the chief redemption of the national Church in later times.

In the next generation many of the descendants of the leading Methodists, lay and clerical, became conspicuous in the evangelical and philanthropic enterprises which have given England her chief modern glory among the Christian nations. Allied mostly with the national Church, and hopeful of its speedy renovation by the new impulses which Methodism had given it, their loyalty to it took an intensity which their fathers might have accused of bigotry, but which could not repel the few veterans who still lingered after the sore combats of the preceding century. The benevolent Thornton, whom Cowper's verse and letters have rendered familiar to the literary world, as his own Methodism has to the religious world, had been active and liberal to the end, in his patronage of the great revival. His son, Henry Thornton, inherited his piety and benevolence as well as his wealth. A man of commanding influence, as much from his character as from his opulence, Henry Thornton possessed also an unusual intellect; "a brow capacious and serene, a scrutinizing eye, and lips slightly separated, as one who listens and prepares to speak, were the true interpreters

of the informing mind within him."[53] No interest of his race appealed to him in vain; his money, influence, and intelligence were consecrated to humanity, and always with most devotion where public indifference or prejudice most neglected it.

In the beautiful village of Clapham, near London, the great Pitt had erected an elegant villa as a refuge from the cares of state and the storms of politics. It was "lofty and symmetrical, curiously wainscotted with books on every side, except where it opened on a far extended lawn, and reposed beneath the giant arms of aged elms and massive tulip trees." It became the home of Henry Thornton, and there, at the close of the day, the Christian banker and philanthropist found peaceful retirement amid the serene beauties of nature, and was refreshed by the recreations of his children, and a beloved "matronly presence which controlled, animated, and harmonized the elements of this little world by a kindly spell, of which none could trace the workings, though the charm was confessed by all." Hither also resorted the good great men of his day, to seek counsel from his practical wisdom; to devise liberal things for the state, the Church, and for all the world; to relax from the cares of public life in untrammeled conversation, not too grave if not too hilarious; to share the sumptuous family hospitalities and join in the family devotions, for there were "his porch, his study, his judgment-seat, his oratory, and 'the church that was in his house'—the reduced, but not imperfect resemblance of that innumerable company which his catholic spirit embraced and loved, under all the varying forms which conceal their union from each other, and from the world. Discord never agitated that tranquil home; lassitude never brooded over it. Those demons quailed at the aspect of a man in whose heart peace had found a resting-

[53] See the elegant article on "The Clapham Sect," Edinburgh Review, 1844; by Sir James Stephen, author of Lectures on the History of France. Stephen himself was the "youth who not seldom listened, while he seemed to read the book spread out before him," in the circle at Clapham.

place, though his intellect was incapable of repose." Thornton's home at Clapham was as much resorted to as Coleridge's at Highgate. Travelers from all parts of the world, especially such as could report the prospects of Christianity and knowledge; philanthropists, wise or Quixotic; men of inventive genius, political reformers, the preachers of Methodism or of the Church, went thither as on pilgrimage, and among them were often found the unfortunate, the poor, and such as had no friend, for the princely layman appropriated during several years nearly six-sevenths of his revenues to alms, and in a single year gave to the poor nearly fifty thousand dollars. More than thirty years he was a member of Parliament, and always represented progressive sentiments, qualified by conservative good sense. He advocated "the great Whig doctrines" of Peace, Reform, Economy, Toleration, and African Emancipation. William Wilberforce wandered gleefully with the children among the beauties of the garden, or sat in the social counsels of the study, planning for religion and liberty throughout the realm and throughout the earth. Granville Sharp, the first chairman of the Bible Society, was by his side; or between them a returned Wesleyan missionary, with news from the plantations of the West Indies. Zachary Macaulay was a commanding figure in the group; and there were also Stephen, the brother-in-law of Wilberforce, and a leader of the growing evangelical party; Grant, who represented in the social discussions the religious claims of India, as he did in the Court of the East India Company's directors; Henry Martyn, destined to die sublimely as a missionary in the East, and to live forever in the admiring remembrance of the Christian world. Lord Teignmouth, a relative of the Hills, and the first president of the Bible Society, was an ever welcome guest in the circle. The venerable Simeon, of Cambridge, was often there to give them his blessing.[54] Rowland

[54] Simeon's relations to the Calvinistic Methodist Churchmen were of great importance in the development of the "Low Church Party." (See Carus's Life of Simeon.) Wesley met him repeatedly and loved him.

Hill and Sir Richard, with their hearty and not undevout pleasantries, and Isaac Milner, the noted Dean of Carlisle, frequented the social sanctuary; John Venn, the projector of the "Church Missionary Society," and son of Venn, the Methodist Churchman, was "looked up to as its pastor and guide;" and his aged father himself died in Christian triumph among them, a veteran evangelist of more than threescore and ten years.[55] "Bell and Lancaster were both their welcome guests; schools, prison discipline, savings' banks, tracts, village libraries, district visitings, and church buildings, each for a time rivaled their cosmopolitan projects." The great political questions of the day were discussed among them, and always from a Christian point of view, and never with a conclusion which they were not ready to refer to the bar of God. "Every human interest had its guardian, every region of the globe its representative." They went from their social and Christian council-chamber, in Clapham, to the political assembly in London, or to Parliament, and there found godless but patriotic statesmen ready, from motives of humanity or of ambition, to fight their measures through; but they depended for success not on these so much as upon the Divine blessing, and the influence of their appeal to the moral sense of the nation. Nearly all the great political reforms which, from that day down to this, have ameliorated England, were canvassed and prayed over at Clapham. They have been brought to pass, not so much by the ambitious eloquence and energy of Parliamentary politicians, as by the resuscitated moral sense of the nation,

"He has spent," says Wesley, (Journal, Dec. 20, 1784,) "some time with Mr. Fletcher at Madeley; two kindred souls, much resembling each other, both in fervor of spirit and in the earnestness of their address."

[55] Cowper, who restricted his associations with the clergy almost exclusively to such as were Methodistic, wrote to Newton respecting the elder Venn: "I have seen few men whom I could love more. Were I capable of envying, in the strict sense of the word, a good man, I should envy him and Mr. Berridge, and yourself, who have spent, and while they last will continue to spend your lives in the service of the only Master worth serving." Life of Henry Venn, by John Venn, Rector of Clapham.

resuscitated by Methodism and appealed to by these representatives and fruits of the Methodist revival; for "they were," says their not too partial historian, "the sons, by natural or spiritual birth, of men who, in the earlier days of Methodism, had shaken off the lethargy in which, till then, the Church of England had been entranced—of men by whose agency the great evangelical doctrine of faith, emerging in its primeval splendor, had not only overpowered the contrary heresies, but had perhaps obscured some kindred truths."

The elder Venn had, as we have seen, been curate of Clapham; he there became acquainted with the elder Thornton, and at his opulent home first saw Lady Huntingdon, and first heard Whitefield, for it was a favorite preaching place of the latter. The great preacher "expounded" there to overflowing assemblies, and was, in co-operation with Thornton and the countess, the real founder of the famous "Clapham sect." "At both ends of the town," he wrote, in his characteristic style, "the word runs and is glorified. The champions in the Church go on like sons of thunder. I am to be at Clapham this evening; Mr. Venn will embrace the first opportunity. May it be a Bethel!"[56]

The Methodist Englishman may, with proper modesty, refrain from claiming the great reforms of English politics, and of even the British constitution, which have occurred since the days of his religious fathers, as due to their Christian labors; the unevangelical Churchman would smile at the claim; but the future impartial and philosophic historian will record that those splendid ameliorations could not have taken place without the popular improvements introduced by Methodism; that the Methodistic influence, as experienced by "the good men of Clapham," gave them their effective power; that the reformed moral sense of the nation, responding to the Christian appeals of these good and great men, secured the triumph and permanence of their political reforms, and that when the Church itself was impotent,

[56] Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. i, chap. 13

Methodism effectively acted through it, and through Dissent, to reclaim, if not to save the nation.

Whatever may be said of such a claim, it will be conceded that the great "moral enterprises" of that and subsequent times in England owe their beginnings chiefly to the influence of Methodism. The Bible, the Tract, and the Missionary Societies, Negro Emancipation, and the general incorporation of the Sunday School into the Church, Dissenting and Established, were, as we have seen, the traceable results of that influence. Most of these interests were discussed and promoted at Clapham. "Bibles," says one who mingled in its circle as a quiet but observant youth, "Bibles, schools, missionaries, the circulation of evangelical books, and the training of evangelical clergymen, the possession of well-attended pulpits, war through the press, and war in Parliament, against every form of injustice which either law or custom sanctioned —such were the forces by which they hoped to extend the kingdom of light, and to resist the tyranny with which the earth was threatened." They established the "Christian Observer" as their organ, under the editorship of Zachary Macaulay; and subsequently arose, for their public assemblies, "Exeter Hall," with its occasional whimsicalities, but its substantial blessings to England and the world.

Such were some of the grand results of the combined influence of Calvinistic and Arminian Methodism on the Church and the Dissent of the times; such some of the proofs of the assertion, heretofore cited from a living Churchman, that from the Methodistic revival "the religious epoch now current must date its commencement," and to it "must be traced what is most characteristic of the present time."[57] While, however, Calvinistic Methodism, from the social position of some of its leaders, enlisted many from the higher classes in these great undertakings, we must seek in the more extended and more vigorous sway of Arminian Methodism, for that popular influence which rallied the masses to them. We take then our final leave

[57] Isaac Taylor's Wesley and Methodism, Preface.

of Calvinistic Methodism, not regretting it as a failure, but rejoicing over it as a mighty auxiliary to its Arminian and more permanent associate—a symmetrical historical fact, having already fulfilled a complete and sublime mission, in the order of divine Providence, whatever may be its future career.[58]

[58] The "good men of Clapham" were stricter Churchmen than their Methodist predecessors, and most of their own descendants have forgotten their Methodistic antecedents in a still stricter Churchmanship; but history can never ignore the Methodistic honor of their fathers, and of their own religious education. The "Christian Observer" very early began to look askance at Methodism; the younger Venn, as we have seen, endeavored to palliate his father's heroic example of "irregularity;" and Dr. Shirley, for some time a laborious secretary of the Bible Society, and afterward Bishop of Sodor and Man, presented a mortifying contrast to the conduct of his Methodist grandfather, (in his letter to the Bishop of Clonfert. See p. 21,) by apologizing to the Bishop of Lichfield for having attended a meeting in behalf of the Moravian Missions. "I am quite prepared," he wrote, "not to attend them again if your lordship thinks it even inexpedient that I should do so." (Letters and Memoirs, by Archdeacon Hill. London. 1849.) The history of Christianity demonstrates the utter hopelessness of any permanent evangelical life in Churches open to the pride and power of "Establishments." Wesley's alleged unfaithfulness to the Church saved Methodism. Robert Hall early expressed his regret at the growing fastidiousness of the evangelical party in the Church. "We feel, with regard to the greater part of those who succeed them, a confidence that they will continue to tread in their steps. But we cannot dissemble our concern at perceiving a set of men rising up among them, ambitious of new-modeling the party, who, if they have too much virtue openly to renounce their principles, yet have too little firmness to endure the consequences; timid, temporizing spirits, who would refine into insipidity; and under we know not what pretenses of regularity, moderation, and a care not to offend, rob it utterly of that energy of character to which it owes its success. If they learn from this and other writers of a similar description to insult their brethren, fawn upon their enemies, and abuse their defenders, they will soon be frittered to pieces; they will become 'like other men,' feeble, enervated, and shorn of their strength." Hall's Works, vol. iv, pp. 122, 123.

CHAPTER IV.

WESLEY AND HIS PREACHERS, FROM 1770 TO 1780.

Wesley in Old Age — Scenes of Itineracy — Wesley's Pastoral Visits — His Ministrations to Prisoners — Execution of Dr. Dodd — Wesley's Literary Labors — His "Calm Address to the American Colonies," and his Views of the American Revolution — Continued Persecution of his Preachers — The Trials of William Darney at Almondbury — Persecution at Seacroft — William England — Matthew Mayer's Conflicts at Oldham — John Oliver and his Trials — Alexander Mather among Mobs — Richard Rodda — His extraordinary Escape in a Mine — His Ministerial Hardships — Poverty of Methodist Preachers — John Pritchard — Death of John Downes — Death of John Nelson — His Funeral — His Character — Silas Told and his Good Works among Malefactors — Illustrations of the Times — Execution of an Innocent Woman — A Man hung for a Sixpence.

We have traced the labors of Wesley and his Arminian associates down to the Conference of 1770. The Calvinistic controversy prevailed during most of the interval from that date to the Conference of 1780, but the Wesleyan itinerants were not diverted by it from their more appropriate work. It was a period of greatly increased labors and rapid advancement to their cause in all parts of the United Kingdom, and they were surprised by frequent reports of its success in America, notwithstanding the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. From Nova Scotia to Antigua in the West Indies, Methodism had unfurled its evangelic standard amid the tumults of the times.

Wesley himself paused not to waste his strength in the Calvinistic combat. A few brief pamphlets, scarcely occupying sixty pages in his collected works, with an occasional popular tract on the general question, were thrown off from his pen as he traversed the land, preaching twice or thrice daily, counseling his "helpers" in Confer-

ences, editing both religious and scientific publications for his people, adjusting local difficulties in his societies, and conducting, in fine, an ecclesiastical scheme which transcended in labors, if not in responsibilities, the combined functions of all the prelates of the land. Though he reached, early in this period, the allotted age of man, his Journals show more extensive travels, and labors of the pen and the pulpit, than in the first decade of his Methodistic career. The gray hairs of threescore and ten years were his only sign of declining life. His brow was smooth, his eye clear and brilliant as in youth—"the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived"[1]—his complexion ruddy, his voice strong, and an addition of years nearly equal to what was then a generation remained for him. Good, great, marvelous old man! history would not be faithful to herself if she could contemplate him at this period of his career without emotion. He had become the best-known man in England, the father of his people, and the wonder of his enemies; and his ministerial host, many of them veteran heroes, like Nelson, Haime, Taylor, and Mather, beheld him with enthusiastic admiration, and bowed to his orders as troops in the field, assured that whatever forlorn hope they were to lead would find him at hand, and could know no defeat. On his seventy-second birth-day he writes:[2] "How is this, that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago?" His sight was considerably better now, and his nerves firmer than they were then. He had none of the infirmities of old age, and had lost several that he had in his youth. The grand *cause*, he says, is, "the good pleasure of God, who doth whatsoever pleaseth him." The chief *means* were, 1. His constantly rising at four o'clock, for about fifty years; 2. His generally preaching at five in the morning, "one of the most healthy exercises in the world;" 3. His never trav-

[1] Wesleyan Methodism in the Congleton Circuit, by Rev. J. B. Dyson, p. 107. London: 1856.

[2] Wesley's Journal, June 28, 1774. Works, vol. iv. Am. edit. My farther citations from Wesley, in this chapter, are from this volume, except when otherwise indicated.

eling less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles in a year.

And this unintermitted traveling, at the rate of more than the circumference of the globe every six years, was performed mostly on horseback down to his sixty-ninth year, when his friends provided for him a carriage. He paid more tolls, says Robert Southey, than any other Englishman. His riding and exposures brought upon him occasional attacks of sickness, but he recovered from them so promptly that he was sometimes disposed to consider his restoration miraculous. While in Ireland, during our present period, he was prostrated by the severest sickness of his life, brought upon him by sleeping at noon on the grass in an orchard, a siesta in which he had indulged for forty years. His tongue was "black as a coal;" he could not turn himself in his bed; his memory failed, and he could give no account of what followed for two or three days. An emetic roused the energy of his constitution; in a few days he was up, and in less than a week was on his way to Dublin. His chief perils were from the stumbling of his horses. He records not a few hair-breadth escapes from them. One of them occasioned an injury which produced an hydrocele, in his seventieth year. A surgical operation, he was informed, would require him to lie on his back fifteen or sixteen days. How could his work stand still during this long interval? and might not the posture and confinement affect his constitution? he inquires. No danger was apprehended by his physician from the malady, and he resolved not to sacrifice his labors for its removal. But it grew worse, and he at last submitted to the operation; half a pint of water was taken from him, and with it appeared a pearl of the size of a small shot.[3] The next day he writes that he is as perfectly easy as if no operation had been performed, and his work goes on

[3] Southey remarks, (Life of Wesley, chap. 30, *note:*) "What an extraordinary relic would this pearl have been had it been extracted from a Romish saint! I know not whether there be any other case on record of a physical *ostracism.*"

as usual. When seventy-three years old he writes that he is far abler to preach than he was at three and twenty. What natural means has God used to produce so wonderful an effect, he asks? The same causes as before are enumerated, but with more particularity: 1. Continual exercise and change of air, by traveling above four thousand miles in a year; 2. Constant rising at four; 3. The ability to sleep immediately, when he needed it; 4. The never losing a night's sleep in his life; 5. Two violent fevers, and two "deep consumptions; these, it is true," he adds, "were rough medicines; but they were of admirable service, causing my flesh to come again, as the flesh of a little child." Lastly he mentions, evenness of temper. "I *feel* and *grieve;* but, by the grace of God, I *fret* at nothing. But still 'the help that is done upon earth, He doeth it himself.' And this he doeth in answer to many prayers."

It would require volumes to detail his travels during the present period. In Ireland he not only visits the chief centers of the Methodistic fields, but penetrates the obscure villages and mountain regions, preaching in the market-places, the streets, and on the hill-sides. He reaches the sequestered region of Glenarm, and records the evangelistic adventures of Smith, the northern pioneer.[4] He preaches in peace among the scenes of the persecutions at Clone and Enniskillen, and writes the story of the trials of John M'Burney, the Irish protomartyr of Methodism. Dublin and Cork receive him with the honors due to a patriarch.

We follow him rapidly through the mountain defiles, the towns and villages, of Wales; and, years after the death of Howell Harris, he exclaims, amid the memories of his old friend, "What a lovely place, and what a lovely family! still consisting of about sixty persons. So the good man is turned again to his dust, but his thoughts do not perish."

He visited Scotland repeatedly during this period, and was better received than ever he had been in the north; the gentry, as well as the common people, flocking to hear him—

[4] See vol. i, book iii, chap. 3.

"all sorts—Seceders, Glassites, Nonjurors, and what not." The magistrates of Perth presented him, in good Latin, the freedom of their city, and the privileges of a burgess, *in debiti amoris et affectuum tesseram erga Johannem Wesley*—"in token of their deserved love and affection." The good citizens of Arbroath honored him in like manner. The Calvinistic "Circular" was abroad, however, and in some places he and his associates were "believed to be dreadful heretics, to whom no countenance should be given." He could trust that to the future, and passed on without debate, preaching daily. He was admitted to some of the kirks, and often, at his five o'clock morning sermon, the assemblies were crowded. But the grave, metaphysical Scotch were still problems to him; their cool impassiveness provoked him to judge them severely; they appeared to him "so wise that they needed no more knowledge; so good that they needed no more religion." They were "too brimful of wisdom and goodness" to be "warned to flee from the wrath to come." He gave them credit, however, for candor and patience under plain-dealing from the pulpit. He knew no men equal to them in this respect. He sometimes justly suspected that their apparent impassivity was owing to his want of a knowledge of the right way of addressing them. Whitefield could overwhelm them with his emotions, and Wesley, after a sermon in Glasgow, acknowledged that the Scots, if touched on the right key, received as lively impressions as the English. Whitefield, however, was a good Calvinist; that was essential to his apostleship with the Scotch. They respected and wondered at Wesley, as unaccountably zealous and devoted for a heretic; he was as much a problem to them as they were to him.

In England he appeared almost ubiquitous during this period. His gray hairs, his steadfast energy, his long endurance of persecution, the triumphs of Methodism among the lowest classes—the colliers of Kingswood, Newcastle, and Wednesbury, over mobs which sometimes had almost resembled the tumults of civil war—had given him a prestige

and a character for heroism which could not fail to command the popular admiration. The young were interested to hear him, by the tales of his early struggles, related by their fathers; the old gathered in his vast assemblies with the sobered, if not saddened, reminiscences of the youthful days in which they first heard him. At South Lye, near Oxford, one man was in his audience, and one only, who had heard there his first sermon, nearly half a century before; "most of the rest had gone to their long home." He hastened often to Cornwall, for it had become the Eden of Methodism. Its rude, but devout miners turned out in armies to hail him, and in the streets of Redruth he now appropriately proclaimed as his text: "Happy are the people that have the Lord for their God."[5] "I went on," he adds, "to our old friends at St. Ives, *many of whom are now gray-headed as well as I.*" A jutting cliff, with the wide expanse of the tranquil ocean in the distance, was his favorite pulpit among them. To accommodate those who could not come up to the hill, he preached again in a street; "well nigh all the town were present," and thousands from all parts of the country. At Gwennap he preached in "the calm, still evening" in its magnificent natural amphitheater, the people covering a circle of nearly fourscore yards diameter. At his next visit the "huge congregation" was larger, it was supposed, by fifteen hundred or two thousand than ever it had been. And at another visit, he writes, the people both filled it and covered the ground round about to a considerable distance; so that, supposing the space to be fourscore yards square, and to contain five persons in a square yard, there must have been above two-and-thirty thousand people present, the largest assembly he had ever addressed. Yet he found, on inquiry, that all could hear, even to the skirts of the congregation—"perhaps the first time that a man of seventy had been heard by thirty thousand persons at once!"

As he rode through the Dales, in the north, admiring the "green gently rising meadows and fields on both sides of

[5] Psalm cxliv, 15, Prayer Book version.

the crystal river, sprinkled over with innumerable little houses," he could record "that three in four, if not nine in ten," of these comfortable homes had "sprung up since the Methodists came hither." Since that time "the beasts were turned into men, and the wilderness into a fruitful field;" and "this blessed people still devoured every word." In London he was now admitted, not only to St. Bartholomew's but also to Allhallow's Church, where, in 1735, he preached for the first time without notes. But not content with these opportunities, and the accommodations of his own chapels, he went often to Moorfields, the scene of his old metropolitan triumphs, and of those of his fellow-laborer, Whitefield; and now, in his old age, he preached to the largest congregation that ever assembled there; yet he assures us that the most distant listeners could hear perfectly well. "So," he writes, "the season for field-preaching is not yet over; it cannot be while so many are in their sins and in their blood." At another time he says: "It being a warm, sunshiny day, I preached in Moorfields in the evening; there were thousands upon thousands, and all were still as night. Not only violence and rioting, but even scoffing at field preachers, are now over."

At Shoreham, where his old friend Perronet still lingered, he records, after preaching, that "no society grows so fast as this, either in grace or number." And "the chief instrument of this glorious work" was a daughter of the venerable vicar, "a burning and a shining light," as were so many of her family during the Methodistic revival. He passes from town to town, frequently preaching in circumstances of similar encouragement. At Chowbent, which had been "the roughest place in all the neighborhood," he found not "the least trace" of its old barbarism remaining; "such is the fruit of the genuine Gospel." The vicar opened the church for him in the evening, and it was crowded in such a manner as it had not been for a hundred years. Immense multitudes still gathered to hear him on John Nelson's Hill, at Birstal — the largest congregation that

was ever seen there, twelve or fourteen thousand—and still greater hosts at Leeds. The next day, at Haworth, Grimshaw's parish, the multitude crowded within and around the church; and at Paddiham, where he addressed a "huge congregation" in the street, he writes: "What has God wrought since Mr. Grimshaw and I were seized near this place by a furious mob, and kept prisoners for some hours! The sons of him who headed that mob now gladly receive our saying." At Colne, the scene of one of his old and fiercest conflicts, the congregation was twice as large as at Haworth, and now the respectful thousands heard with "deep attention on every face," while he discoursed of "the great white throne coming down from heaven." "I scarce ever saw," he adds, "a congregation wherein men, women, and children stood in such a posture: and this in the town where thirty years ago no Methodist could show his head! The first who preached here was John Jane, who was innocently riding through the town, when the zealous mob pulled him off his horse, and put him in the stocks. He seized the opportunity, and vehemently exhorted them 'to flee from the wrath to come.'" We have already seen John Jane, seen him die as heroically as he here preached, leaving not enough effects, with "his clothes, hat, and wig," to pay his funeral expenses, but "departing with a smile on his face," counting himself rich, and exclaiming, "I find the love of God in Christ Jesus."[6] Wesley was now continually reminded of such incidents of his early ministry.

With a mixture of sadness and gladness he took leave, in the latter part of the present decade, of his old fortress, the Foundry, the first opened of his chapels, the scene of his first Conference, and from the adjacent parsonage of which his mother had ascended to heaven. In his Journal of August 8, 1779, he says: "This was the last night which I spent at the Foundry. What hath God wrought there in forty years!" The name and site of the edifice are renowned in the history of Methodism. It stood on Windmill Hill,

[6] Vol. i, book iv, chap. 1.

Upper Moorfields, in what is still known as Windmill-street, covering about a hundred and twenty-five by a hundred feet of ground, and comprising a chapel, preacher's house or parsonage, school, Band-room, and other accommodations There was a belfry on one of the gable ends, the bell of which called the worshipers together oftener perhaps than any other in the metropolis; during forty years it had summoned them daily at five o'clock in the morning, besides many other stated times during the week. The chapel boasted no pews, but had ten or twelve seats, with back rails, in front of the pulpit. There were free seats for females under the front gallery, and under the side galleries for males. The side galleries were appropriated exclusively to males, and the front gallery to females. The Band-room was in the rear of the chapel, and could receive three hundred worshipers; it was the place of the five o'clock morning sermon in winter, of the Band-meetings on Thursday nights, after the evening sermon, and of the two o'clock prayer-meetings on Wednesdays and Fridays. The north end of this apartment was furnished with desks for the school, the scene of faithful Silas Told's labors; and the south end with accommodations for the sale of Wesley's publications—the first of those "Book Concerns" which have since ranked among the chief publishing houses of the religious world. Over the Band-room were Wesley's apartments, including his study. One room was used as a Dispensary, where medicines were gratuitously given to the poor; he records six or seven hundred applicants in four months. The parsonage, occupied by assistant preachers and domestics, was at the extremity of the chapel, next to the gable with the belfry, and was entered through the chapel; and near at hand were a coach-house and stable.[7]

No trace of the venerable structure now remains; but its every detail is sacred to Methodists throughout the world, and engravings of it and its vicinity are everywhere familiar to them.

[7] Jobson's Chapel and School Architecture, p. 48. London.

Wesley collected funds during several years in all his "Connection" for the erection of a better and larger edifice, and on the 1st day of April, 1777, he laid the corner-stone of the now famous City Road Chapel. On the first of November, of the following year, he dedicated it, amid an immense assembly, by a sermon on Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, and "God was eminently present in the midst of the congregation." It was superior to any example of chapel architecture then possessed by the Dissenters in the metropolis, and is still considered a beautiful, though a chastely simple structure. Its walls bear tablets to the memory of both the Wesleys, Fletcher, Coke, Benson, and other eminent Methodists, preachers and laymen. Its adjacent accommodations for bands, classes, and the parsonage, are better than were those of the Foundry. In its burial ground sleep Wesley and many of his old associates in labor and suffering.

Next to this, his London head-quarters, his favorite home was the noted Orphan House, at Newcastle, so called because it was designed, and for some time used, as an orphan asylum, as well as a chapel and residence of his itinerants. He laid its foundation on the 20th of December, 1742. The site was forty yards in length. In the middle was erected the edifice, leaving room for a small court-yard before, and a garden behind it. Great was the gathering when the ground was broken. "We praised God," says Wesley, "and prayed that he would prosper the work of our hands upon it"—a prayer which still prevails. Three or four times, in the evening service, he was forced to break off preaching, that the excited people might pray and give thanks unto God. On the 25th of March following he opened the edifice with divine worship. He was always judicious in the selection of the sites of his chapels, and that of the Orphan House was then, and continues to be, one of the most eligible in Newcastle. The chapel occupied the lower part of the building; it was at first without galleries, but they were subsequently added, and the accommodations

were then about sufficient for one thousand hearers. The structure was square; a broad staircase on the outside, at the left corner of the quadrangle, led to a corridor, or covered way, like a balcony, which was the entrance to the gallery, the door into that part of the edifice being exactly above the entrance to the floor of the chapel. Above the chapel were two additional stories, with access to them by a continuation of the staircase on the outside. The lower story contained a spacious hall in the center, used for the meeting of the bands, and several class-rooms on each side. The upper story contained two suites of apartments, each having its separate staircase, for the accommodation of the preachers' families. Surmounting the building was a single apartment, like a turret: this was the study, and was appropriated to Wesley's use whenever he was in the town. There was a private staircase from the Band-room into the gallery of the chapel, by which the preachers descended to the pulpit. There were altogether fifteen rooms in the edifice, besides the Band-room, and four small dwellings, which stood in the front of the building, two on each side of the entrance, partly screening the chapel from view.[8]

When the apartments of the Orphan House were all occupied the establishment was necessarily large, and required the exercise of much skill and diligence in the housekeeper. Grace Murray, whose many excellences not only won, but deserved, more than the esteem of Wesley,[9] presided over

[8] Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1843, p. 550. London.

[9] See vol. i, book iii, chap. 2. "She was a young, beautiful, and well-educated widow. . . . Mr. Wesley had employed this lady, who was as discreet as she was attractive, to perform the duty of visiting and organizing the female classes in the north of England. When engaged in this work Mrs. Murray itinerated on horseback, and frequently without any companion. An old man told Dr. Bunting how one day he saw her, at a place in Yorkshire, come forth to the door of a house to take her departure. A servant brought round her steed. She gave a glance to see that all was right, then laid her hand on her horse's shoulder. The well-trained animal immediately knelt down. The lady, who suffered no man to help her in mounting, seated herself lightly on the saddle, and, as in an instant, she was out of sight; and the old man, Mr. Bunting tells us, saw her no more, 'except in dreams.' Jabez Bunting preached the funeral

it for several years, and by her rare skill, her piety, and womanly amenities, rendered it a hallowed and favorite, though always a brief home for the great evangelist and his laborious itinerants. Wesley, than whom no man more enjoyed domestic and studious retirement, often retreated to it from his wanderings and persecutions. "I was ready to say, It is good for me to be here," he wrote at one time; "but," he adds, "I must not build tabernacles; I am to be a wanderer upon earth, and desire no rest till my spirit returns to God."

Years had now passed since Grace Murray, "the desire of his eyes," had welcomed him there, but it was still dear to him. In his seventy-sixth year he writes: "I rested at Newcastle; lovely place, lovely company! But I believe there is another world, therefore I must arise and go hence;" and the next day he was away, preaching twice before the sun went down.

The Orphan House was the frequent resort of the early itinerants for rest from their labors, or restoration from sickness. They paused there to refresh themselves, among its warm-hearted Methodists, before passing on to the cold receptions of Scotland, and returned to recruit their strength, from the bleak winters of the Highlands. Cownley, Hopper, Taylor, Lee, Mather, Wright, and most others of whom we have records, have left expressions of thankfulness and endearment for the comfortable refuge it afforded them. Newcastle was the head-quarters of northern Methodism; its circuit comprised most of the present circuits in the north of England, and reached even to Edinburgh. Thomas Beard, the protomartyr of Methodism, died there, "praising God continually" with his expiring breath. A hundred years after Wesley's first visit, there were more than a hundred Methodist places of worship, containing more than twenty thousand sittings, and accommodations for twelve thousand Sunday scholars, within a circle of ten miles around the city.

sermon of Grace Murray, at Chapel-en-le-Frith, in Derbyshire, in the year 1803." Letter of Rev. J. H. Rigg, England, to the author.

With his travels during the present decade, Wesley combined no small amount of "pastoral visiting." He went often from house to house among the members of his principal societies. He did so at Kingswood, "taking them from west to east," and saw "that it would be unspeakably useful to them." In London he "began at the east end of the town to visit the society from house to house:" he knew, he says, no branch of the pastoral office which is of greater importance. This he did when more than seventy years old, and when burdened with the cares of all his Churches. At Bristol, also, he writes, aged seventy-three, that he began, what he had long intended, to visit the society from house to house, setting apart at least two hours in a day for that purpose.

He plunged into the most wretched places on these pastoral errands. In his seventy-fourth year he says: "I began visiting those of our society who lived in Bethnal Green hamlet. Many of them I found in such poverty as few can conceive without seeing it. O why do not all the rich, that fear God, constantly visit the poor! Can they spend part of their spare time better? Certainly not. So they will find in that day when every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. Such another scene I saw the next day, in visiting another part of the society. I have not found any such distress, no, not in the prison of Newgate. One poor man was just creeping out of his sick bed, to his ragged wife and three little children, who were more than half naked, and the very picture of famine; when one brought in a loaf of bread, they all ran, seized upon it, and tore it in pieces in an instant. Who would not rejoice that there is another world?"

He frequented also the prisons of the principal cities, preaching, not without hope, to the condemned, the day before their execution. He never declined such opportunities except temporarily in one case. Dr. Dodd, distinguished in London as an eloquent preacher, and noted more as a religious writer than a religious man, had attacked his opinions

repeatedly in the public journals. Wesley replied to him briefly.[10] Ten years passed, when a terrible fate overtook the brilliant divine. He had forged a bond on his former pupil, the Earl of Chesterfield, and was condemned to the gallows. In his imprisonment and despair his thoughts turned to Wesley, who, he now saw, was the man to console and guide him through the brief and dark passage before him. He sent earnest entreaties for a visit from the aged apostle; but Wesley, as loyal to the law as he was compassionate to its victims, and suspecting that he wished only to obtain his aid among influential men against the course of justice—which he judged "would be labor lost"—hesitated to go. The third messenger declared that he would not return without him. Wesley went, and has left an "Account of Dr. Dodd," published six years after his execution, which shows the tenderest sympathy and charity for his unfortunate antagonist.[11] Entering the prisoner's room, he sat down by his bedside, (for the afflicted man had then a fever,) and during an hour ministered to him the consolations of the Gospel. "He spoke," says Wesley, "of nothing but his own soul, and appeared to regard nothing in comparison of it; so that I went away far better satisfied than I came."

In a few days he was with him again. After a long journey he hastened still again to the mournful scene. Sentence of death had been passed upon the prisoner. Unparalleled efforts throughout the country, to obtain a mitigation of the penalty, had failed. Wesley, who was now perhaps the man most welcome on earth to the crushed victim, spent another hour with him, and left him "quiet and composed, sorrowing, but not without hope, and receiving everything as at the hand of God." Two days before the execution he was again by his side. The scene was harrowing, but hopeful. The wife of Dodd came in, but fell fainting, and was caught in the arms of her husband, who bore her to a chair.[12] Wesley's charitable heart did not entertain

[10] Journal, March 26, 1767. [11] Wesley's Works, vol. vi, p. 537.
[12] She spent the rest of her life in a madhouse.

a doubt of the spiritual salvation of the fallen, but penitent man. He spoke to him the most fervent words of consolation. "Sir," he said, "I think you do not ask enough or expect enough from God your Saviour. The present blessing you may expect from him is, to be filled with all joy, as well as peace in believing." "O sir," replied the sufferer, "it is not for such a sinner as me to expect any joy in this world. The utmost I can desire is peace; and through the mercy of God, that I have."

Charles Wesley, who had charge of the London societies, also visited him, and wrote two affecting poems on his fate, one after his execution, rebuking in severe language the merciless disregard of the government for the petitions of the people. Mary Bosanquet, afterward the wife of Fletcher, corresponded with him. Taking leave of her in a final letter, he wrote: "On Friday I am to be made immortal; I die with a heart fully contrite, and broken, under a sense of its great and manifold offenses, but comforted and sustained by a firm faith in the pardoning love of Jesus Christ."[13] At his execution he seemed, says Wesley, entirely composed. When he came out of the gate an innumerable multitude were waiting, many of whom seemed ready to insult him. But the moment they saw him their hearts were touched, and they began to bless him and pray for him. One of his fellow-prisoners appeared to be in utter despair. Dodd, forgetting himself, endeavored to comfort him, citing for the purpose the promises of the Scriptures. After some time spent in prayer, he pulled the cap over his eyes, and, sinking down, seemed to die in a moment. "I make no doubt," adds Wesley, "but in that moment the angels were ready to carry him into Abraham's bosom."

Wesley's theology was strict, but he never despaired of any man who "called upon the name of the Lord." The consolation which he administered to this polished criminal he preached to the lowest culprits, from the beginning of his

[13] Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, chap. 24.

career at Oxford till his death; he bore to them in their dungeons the message of the "great salvation;" and scores, probably hundreds, heard from him in their extremity that Christ, "who died for us," is also "the resurrection and the life."

He was also busy with his pen throughout this decade, and his publishing house in London poured forth incessantly its pamphlets and volumes, which were distributed by his preachers over the United Kingdom. His labors in this respect seemed indeed enough for the whole time of an industrious man. In 1773 he issued a collected edition of his works in thirty-two duodecimo volumes. In 1778 he began the Arminian Magazine, which he conducted till his death, and which has continued, in various series and under different titles, down to our day—an invaluable repertory of Methodist historical matter, as well as of general religious intelligence and literature.[14] One of his most important publications, during this period, was his "Calm Address to the American Colonies," which was followed the next year by a tract, entitled "Some Observations on Civil Liberty." His opinions were, of course, loyal to his government, and gave no slight offense to the liberal party both in England and America. He was severely attacked at home, but was defended by Fletcher, who dropped for a season the Calvinistic controversy, to save his friend the necessity of wasting his time in a political dispute upon which he should not have entered. Wesley's Calm Address was mostly a reproduction, in a popular form, of Johnson's Taxation no Tyranny, which was published the same year. He was accustomed thus to compile and abridge works which he considered of importance to common readers; but Toplady seized this opportunity of branding him as a plagiarist, in his "Old Fox Tarred and Feathered." In a subsequent edition Wesley candidly stated his obligations to Johnson. Fletcher's defense of Wesley's pamphlet interested the government, and pro-

[14] In 1798 the title was changed to "Methodist Magazine," and again, in 1822, to "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," which name it still bears.

cured an offer of its patronage; but the pious vicar replied, "I want nothing but more grace." It is due to the memory of Wesley to say that he, meantime, wrote a letter to the Premier, Lord North, and to the Secretary of the Colonies, Lord Dartmouth, remonstrating against the war, and plead ing for the Americans.[15] He declares in it that, in spite of all his long rooted prejudices as a Churchman and a loyalist, he cannot avoid thinking, if he think at all, that "these, an oppressed people, asked for nothing more than their legal rights, and that, in the most modest and inoffensive manner that the nature of the thing would allow. But waiving this, waiving all considerations of right and wrong, I ask," he adds with prophetic foresight, "Is it common sense to use force toward the Americans? My lord, whatever has been affirmed, these men will not be frightened; and it seems they will not be conquered so easily as was at first imagined. They will probably dispute every inch of ground, and, if they die, die sword in hand. Indeed, some of our valiant officers say, 'Two thousand men will clear America of these rebels.' No, nor twenty thousand, be they rebels or not, nor perhaps treble that number. They are as strong men as you; they are as valiant as you, if not abundantly more valiant, for they are one and all enthusiasts — enthusiasts for liberty. They are calm, deliberate enthusiasts: and we know how this principle breathes into softer souls stern love of war, and thirst of vengeance, and contempt of death. We know men, animated with this spirit, will leap into a fire, or rush into a cannon's mouth."

The letter, is long and full of sagacious views and statesmanlike counsels.

Wesley was not without some of his old trials during this period, trials among false brethren in his societies, and occasional disturbances from the mob; but his cause was now so strong that the former were readily repressed by his rigorous discipline, and the latter were more annoyances than

[15] It has recently been published from Lord North's copy. See it in the Appendix to Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i.

persecutions—the beating of a drum on the outskirts of his congregation; the assaults of Papists in Ireland, checked usually with promptness by magistrates or gentlemen in the assembly; or the ringing of church bells to drown his voice. The churches began to open their pulpits to him, but in many places he was still repelled from them with scorn, and he records at least one instance in which he and all his preachers were yet denied the Lord's Supper, by the order of a bishop.

Such was the rapid extension of the Methodistic field, during the present decade, that many places were reached by his preachers for the first time, and, not unfrequently, with the early hostilities; and the appearance of a new laborer in an old appointment was often the signal for renewed persecutions.

At the beginning of this period William Darney, a faithful evangelist, had some sore trials. He was accustomed to pay a weekly visit to Almondbury. At first he found seven members in its society; they increased, however, in one month to thirty-two. This rapid increase infuriated the enemies of Methodism in the town, and provoked violent persecutions, to which the rabble were incited by their clergyman, who had declared to them from the pulpit that he was quite sufficient for the ministerial work in the parish, and that they should have no other teacher. The clerk, who was also deputy constable, shared the malice of the minister against the itinerant. One evening, when Darney had been preaching, the former came into the house where he lodged, and seized him in order to drag him out to the mob which was collected in the street; two members of the society, perceiving the preacher's danger from the madness of the people, got hold of him, and, in a violent struggle between friends and foes, his coat was rent; but his friends succeeded in rescuing him from the rioters. The week following he visited the place again, nothing daunted, and the people peaceably assembled to worship God in a private house, licensed for that purpose; but soon after the services

commenced the rabble gathered about it. Darney had taken his text from 2 Thess. i, 7–10: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking venge ance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." The text seemed a challenge, and while he was exhorting his persecuted brethren to take courage, the clerk came in, followed by the enraged people, and, holding his constable's staff in his hand, said, "I charge thee in the name of King George to come down." Darney promptly answered: "I charge thee in the name of the King of kings that thou let me go on with my sermon." The clerk shouted, "Pull him down." The mob forthwith seized the preacher, tore his venerable white locks, and he fell heavily to the ground, much injured, for he was as corpulent as brave. His friends rallied round him and with great difficulty led him to his chamber, where they hoped he would be safe from further violence; but the rioters followed him thither, and dragged him into the street, where they threw him down, fell upon him, and kicked him with their iron-shod clogs. They then forced him down the street as far as the vicarage, and there again prostrated him, and abused him in the most barbarous manner, until it was feared that his life would be sacrificed. He at length escaped to his lodgings, though much injured. A company of Methodists came over from Tong to sympathise with their persecuted brethren, and insisted on an appeal to the law. The vicar of Sandal, who was a justice of the peace, and in this instance, at least, more honest than many of his class, was applied to for redress by the Wesleyans and their almost martyred preacher. The clerk cited in his defense the noted Five Mile Act of Charles II. "That act," replied the vicar sternly, "is for thee and thy mob; as Mr. Darney is a licensed preacher, and was preaching in a licensed house, you might as well have pulled me down when preaching in my own church; and if you do not settle this business before the quarter sessions, both you and all concerned in this

brutal affair will be transported." It appears that they went to Sandal in high spirits, assuring themselves of victory, and had given orders that the bells should commence ringing on their return. They were, however, disappointed, and had to slink into the town in disgrace. The matter was soon afterward settled between the two parties, and the determined itinerant went on his way rejoicing. The little class had, nevertheless, to meet for some time as early as five o'clock in the morning to elude their enemies. They assembled at the house of Abraham Moss, a well-remembered Methodist of that region, whose home and person were assailed in these tumults, and who, many years later, used to refer to them as a veteran to his old battles. "How," he said, "did we love one another! How glad were we to see each other! How happy when we met together!" [16]

John Nelson had conquered the mobs in Birstal and Leeds, but in some of the small towns of Yorkshire the semi-barbarous people received the itinerants with the old greetings—shouts, and stones, and bludgeons. Seacroft, being at a considerable distance from the parish church, was the scene of "ungodliness in all its forms." William England, however, welcomed the evangelists into his house, and became a hearty Methodist. A skillful and industrious carpenter, he was nevertheless turned away by his employer for his Methodism; but another townsman gave him employment, and said he "might pray on the housetop if he pleased, for he was the best workman in the town." A neighboring "gentleman" hired a noted drunkard and fighter to pursue the preachers from village to village, and they continued their labors in the neighborhood at the hazard of their lives. The ruffian cut off his hair, and wore a hunter's cap, in order that he might be the better prepared to combat with those who fell in his way. He persisted in this bad work for some time, and was the terror of all the serious people in the vicinity; "but the Lord took care of

[16] Wesleyan Magazine, 1842, pp. 619–621.

his infant flock, and delivered them out of the hands of the lion," says a pious writer of the times. The hardened persecutor was awakened to a sense of his sin, and, turning away from his vices, joined the very people whom he had so violently opposed. His wife and daughter, who were harmless, quiet persons, were greatly rejoiced at the extraordinary change which had taken place in him, as they were entirely dependent upon him for support; but afterward, seeing him in great distress on account of his sins, they thought he would lose his senses, and never let him rest till they prevailed upon him to leave the society. He had no sooner taken their advice than he again fell into drunkenness, to their unspeakable sorrow; yet he continued to hear the Methodist preachers for nearly forty years, would dispute for them in all companies, and even fight for them when he thought it necessary; but he remained an irreclaimable slave to his besetting sin, a melancholy warning to his reclaimed neighbors.

Good William England's house was attacked, and all its windows were broken, because he received the itinerants; but such was the excellence of his character, that a professed atheist came to his help, dispersed the mob, and became his steadfast friend. England died "singing the praises of God," years after these trials had passed. His memory has ever since been precious among his townsmen, and the blessing of Obed-edom rested upon his house. All his family became Methodists. "The Lord," wrote one of his sons, "did not leave a hoof behind in spiritual Egypt. We were one of those highly favored families who go up together with singing to Mount Zion. I do not know that any one family on earth has greater cause to praise the Lord for raising up the Methodist preachers to publish the Gospel of peace in his name, than we." In extreme age this same son wrote: "I have good reason to believe that every branch of my father's family is now in heaven except myself." He, soon after, followed them. John Pawson, one of Wesley's veterans, referring to these scenes, wrote early in the present century: "Seacroft was indeed a barren wilder

ness before Methodism was known there, but since that time what hath God wrought? Why, miracles of mercy and grace." [17]

The trials of these early evangelists made them at once prudent and brave; at least, weak-hearted and weak-headed men were soon confounded, and retreated from their ranks. Matthew Mayer was a "good soldier of the Lord Jesus" among them, and labored mightily during these times, as also before and after them, though as a humble local preacher. He heard Wesley preach at Manchester, and says he was "wonderfully pleased with the kindness and affection among the early friends of Methodism, who came from different parts on that occasion." He cast in his lot with them and became the ninth member of the class at Stockport. Three years was he seeking "peace with God;" but he found it at last, and then went about the country preaching it to others. Accompanied by John Morris, an earnest layman of Manchester, he established prayer-meetings in Davyhulme, Dukinfield, Ashton, and other places. Such meetings had not been known before in that part of England, Mayer, according to his biographer, being the founder of them.[18] At Davyhulme he gathered fifty converts into classes in a few weeks, and several useful preachers were raised up by his labors. Wesley encouraged him to go about preaching to the poor, and for twenty years he went up and down the land with surprising success. "There are few towns," says his biographer, as late as 1816, "in Cheshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, the south of Lancashire, or the west of Yorkshire, where there are not, to this day, many living witnesses of the Divine power which attended his word; and hundreds who departed in the triumphs of faith, and whose first religious impressions were received under his preaching, were ready to welcome him to the shores of blessedness when he reached them." He was solicited to go to Oldham to preach in the street. The inhabitants of that town were

[17] Methodist Magazine, 1803, pp. 110–116. [18] Ibid., 1816, p. 6.

uncommonly rude and demoralized, and had violently driven away every Methodist preacher who had come among them. Mayer knew this fact, as well as the general character of the people; but considering the invitation as a call from God, and having confidence "that his God would deliver him from even the power of these lions," he promised to go on the following Sabbath. The mob, encouraged by the principal people of the town, were determined he should not preach, and that if he attempted it he should be put into the dungeon, which, in consideration of his being a "respectable person," they had the politeness to have swept out and furnished with clean straw for his accommodation. A number of his friends from Dukinfield and Ashton went with him, expecting serious opposition. They arrived before noon, and when the service of the Church was ended, he asked a townsman to let him stand at his door. The man swore if he came thither he would cleave his skull. He then went to another door to ask the same favor; the instant reply was, "Yea, and welcome." Here, having mounted a four-footed bench, as his pulpit, he gave out a hymn and prayed, and the people were all quiet. But when he was about to address them a numerous mob came up, headed by the constables and church-wardens. These demanded with vehemence, "By what authority do you come hither?" He replied, for he was a self-respectful, brave man, "By what authority do you ask me?" They said, "We are the constables and church-wardens of Oldham; we do not want any of your preaching here." The mob cried out, "Pull him down, pull him down, and we will take him away." He then, addressing himself to the constables, said: "You have no authority to pull me down: I have authority both from God and man. I am protected by the laws of my country, and if you pull me down you must take the consequence. What I desire of you is that you will hear me patiently, and if you have anything to object I will answer your objections afterward." The constables required him to produce his authority. He

replied, "Gentlemen, I am not obliged to do this to you, but to satisfy the people I will produce it." Having read his license to preach, he said, "This is my protection; let any man who dare, lay hands on me. And since you are the constables, and are sworn to keep the peace, I charge you not only to keep the peace yourselves, but also to take care that the king's peace be not broken in your presence, as you will be answerable before your betters on another day." This bold and unexpected challenge quite stunned them, and they stood looking at one another not knowing what to do, while the preacher proclaimed his text: "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." He commanded their serious attention, and had not proceeded far in his discourse before one of the constables, turning pale, began to tremble; the word had reached an heart. The other perceiving this effect, was filled with rage, yet dared not lay hands on the preacher; but after some time contrived to upset the bench on which he stood. Mayer stepped to the ground, and being still on a high position, went on with his discourse, till at length the constable and a few of his adherents pushed him among the people. The mob now began to quarrel among themselves, some being for and some against the preacher. He and his friends, however, walked quietly away from the spot, and as they went along the street, a grave-looking old man came with his hat in his hand, and said, "Sir, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof, but if you please, you shall preach in my house and welcome." The house was instantly filled with people, and the preacher finished his discourse without further interruption. He had prevailed, and under this sermon "it pleased God," says the biographer of Mayer, "that the old man, his wife, and a daughter were all deeply awakened, and from that day they began to seek the Lord." A house was obtained for the house, and the Manchester preachers occupied it at their visits to Oldham till they

obtained a large room, which was at length superseded by a commodious chapel.

Some years after these trials an interesting scene occurred at Oldham. Mayer had been preaching in the chapel, and was holding a Love-feast, when he related the circumstances of his first visit to the town, and contrasted the reception he then met, with their present comfortable and flourishing condition. When he had concluded, a woman stood up and said: "I am a daughter of the old man who received you into his house: my father, and mother, and sister are dead; and, thanks be to God! they all died happy in the Lord, and I am left a living witness of his pardoning mercy." Another then rose and said: "I am the husband of that old man's daughter, and I can also rejoice in God my Saviour." After him an elderly man rose and said: "I am the man that first gave you liberty to stand at my door, and now, blessed be God! I enjoy a sense of his favor, which is better than life." Some time after this Mayer was requested to go to Oldham, to preach a funeral sermon for a woman of whose name he had no recollection. Upon inquiry, it appeared that she was a child at the time of his first visit, and was so much affected under the sermon, that in the simplicity of her heart, having heard that she ought to tread in the steps of the righteous, she followed him down the street, literally treading in his footsteps in the throng of his persecutors. God blessed her simple earnestness, and caused her to grow up in his fear. She became an eminently pious Christian, and died in the triumph of faith.

Such scenes were of continual occurrence during these eventful times, inspiring the persecuted evangelists with thankful courage, and confounding their enemies. For thirty years Matthew Mayer's name was prominent on the Local Preacher's Plan of Stockport circuit. He preached often at Sheffield, Mansfield, Bolton, Rochdale, and Oldham. He supplied Oldham-street Chapel, in Manchester, once a month, and it is said that after laboring there more than

forty years, no other preacher commanded a larger congregation than was attracted by his humble ministrations.

John Oliver had some good and some hard times during this period. He was an energetic laborer, and noted in his day among Wesley's "helpers." His autobiography, buried among the contents of the old Arminian Magazine, is full of strange incidents and adventures.[19] The little class at Stockport, which had welcomed Matthew Mayer, gave Oliver also to the Methodist ministry. In a conversation with one of its members, he endeavored to convince the Methodist that his religion was false and dangerous to the "Church," of which Oliver was a loyal, though not a very devout friend. Before they parted the Methodist convinced him that he knew little or nothing about true religion. He afterward avoided his pious friend, but resolved to give up his favorite cock-fighting and other diversions, to pray, fast, go faithfully to church, and say the collects daily. His father, in whose shop he was employed, disliked his growing seriousness, and induced him to spend a Sunday evening with some gay comrades at an inn, but he returned home with a smitten conscience, and was in agony for some days. Being invited to the Methodist meetings, his father threatened to "knock his brains out" if he went, though he should be hung for it. He clandestinely went, however, and returned home pondering with hope on some striking cases of Christian experience which he had heard in the little company. He got upon his knees in secret, and while praying received the "witness" of his acceptance with God, and thought even that he heard a voice saying that his sins were all forgiven. "I loved God," he afterward wrote, "I loved all mankind; I could not tell whether I was in the body or out of it." Forthwith he joined the Wesleyans. His irritable father was enraged, and addressed warnings to all the Stockport Methodists, forbidding them to receive his son into their meetings or houses. He periled the life of the young man, shivering bludgeons

[19] Arminian Magazine, 1779. Southey has caricatured him as usual. See his American editor Dr. Curry's note, Life of Wesley, chap. 17.

and chairs upon his head. The whole town, it is said, talked of these facts; and the impetuous parent, who really though roughly loved him, relented, weeping over his boy, and beseeching him not to break his heart in his old age. Three clergymen of Stockport were called in to reclaim the youth, and he was offered the privilege of going to the church daily if he would only avoid the Methodists. Oliver was ready to do anything to conciliate his father, except to violate his conscience in this respect. His heart, he says, was "kept in fear and love" for some time under all these trials; but having, at an unguarded moment, "given way to temptation, and grieved the Holy Spirit," he was overwhelmed with darkness and dismay. The tempter assured his tender conscience that he was forsaken of God. He slept little, ate hardly anything, and sank into profound melancholy. Rising one morning very early, he went to the river and threw himself into it, to end his wretched life. He was rescued, but how he knew not, "unless God had sent one of his ministering spirits to help him in time of need." Providentially he was carried to the house of a Methodist, where there was preaching the very same evening; but "Satan," he says, "came upon him like thunder," accusing him as a self-murderer, and he tried again to commit suicide by strangling himself with his handkerchief. His father was called in, and being at heart a generous, though obstinate man, bore him home with tenderness. The young man had evidently been rendered insane by his persecutions and mental conflicts, and his mind, more than his body, needed relieving treatment. His anxious father sent for a physician—a godless one, as Oliver assures us, who undertook to grapple with the case most vigorously, bleeding the sufferer profusely, blistering his feet, back, and head, and physicing him thoroughly. This treatment, pursued for nearly two months, did not restore him. Some of his religious friends recommended him to go to Manchester and escape the spiritual trials of his irreligious home. He went thither; his mother pursued him and brought him back by a stratagem, but he had now

full permission to go among the Methodists, who had been fasting and praying for him. With them he found the medicine which his disturbed mind needed. "My strength," he says, "came again; my light, my life, my God. I was filled with all joy and peace in believing." He soon became a class-leader, and in due time Wesley called him into the itinerant ranks, where he met with "fiery trials," but bore them bravely.

In 1774 he was arrested, on Chester circuit, while preaching to a thousand people in the open air at Wrexham. A constable came with orders from a neighboring justice to apprehend him. Oliver desired him to stay till he had finished his discourse, when he would go with him. The officer agreed so to do; but the justice, impatient of the delay, came himself, and seized the preacher by the collar. "Sir," said Oliver, "here is no riot; all is peaceable; and I am a licensed preacher." The justice dragged him on, nevertheless, till he saw the constable, and then charged the latter to carry him to prison. As they were walking he said to the officer, "I will not go unless you have a written order." The latter went to the justice, and returned with an order "to convey the body of John Oliver, a vagrant preacher, who hath unlawfully assembled a concourse of people against the peace of our sovereign lord the king, to the House of Correction in the town of Wrexham."

The result was that he was cast into prison, being conducted thither by the constable through an almost impenetrable crowd. He seized the opportunity, before he was shut in, to "exhort" the multitude, explaining to them his faith, and to pray with them, "whereby he was greatly refreshed and most of the people deeply affected." Some of them were ready to fight for him. One asked him to preach at his door, and swore he would defend him against all opposers; another offered him bail to the amount of five hundred pounds. Many wished, as with godly John Nelson, at Bradford, to spend the night with him in prison; but he chose to be alone with his own thoughts, meditating

on the best means of defending himself. So well did he address himself to his persecutors, when summoned before the magistrate, on the morrow, that he triumphed. The attorney was confounded, and retreated before the case was through. The justice was enraged, pronounced his license good for nothing, and threatened to have him whipped out of the town, unless he promised never to appear there again. "I am an Englishman," replied Oliver, manfully; "I will make no such promise." The defeated magistrate was glad at last to order him "to go about his business." "So," says the victorious itinerant, "I took my leave, rejoicing that I was counted worthy to suffer for my Master's sake."

During our present period he labored with much success, and not a few conflicts, on Bristol, Chester, Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool and Macclesfield circuits—long "rounds," with hard work, but great triumphs. "God has wrought wonderfully of late in Bristol," he wrote; "he is blessing us on every side; some hundreds have, within this year, been added to the societies." At Thong the people fell, in agony, to the ground, crying out, "Lord, help me; save, or I perish." On Sheffield circuit there was "a great outpouring of the Spirit of God, and throughout the year there appeared to be a general moving among the people." On Manchester circuit "we had," he wrote, "some severe trials; but going on hand in hand, we were more than conquerors." After thirty years of indefatigable labor, he says: "I bless God that I never was in any circuit where I had not some seals of my mission."[20]

Alexander Mather was one of the most notable heroes of Methodism in the last century. He was a Scotchman, and had not a little of the energy and tenacity of Scotch temper in him, but he was distinguished by his pathetic eloquence and his tenderness for the poor and suffering. John Pawson, one of his old fellow-laborers, lamenting his death, which was as courageously met as the trials of his life, says:

[20] A cloud seems to have gathered at last over this laborious man. His name disappears from the Minutes in 1783. No reason for the fact is given.

"Considered as a man, he was possessed of real greatness of mind, so that where the honor of God or the salvation of souls was concerned, as he would spare no pains, so he dreaded no danger, and was not ashamed to speak with his enemies in the gate. He feared the face of no man. He was remarkably ready in answering those who opposed the work of God, in however high a station they might stand; for although he highly reverenced magistrates, and gave honor to whom honor was due, yet he was not to be terrified from his duty by the threatenings of any man, but would resolutely go forward with his work, in the name and in the strength of the Lord God."[21]

A nice sense of honor had he, also, respecting his Methodistic work, and traitors or cowards in the cause dreaded his manly rebuke. Benson, the Methodist commentator, said that during thirty years acquaintance with him he never knew anything affect the generous Scotchman more deeply than offenses which touched the honor of God, or injured the welfare of the Methodist Connection.[22]

By his strict Presbyterian education he grew up with unsullied virtue and unusual intelligence. When he married he resolved to have family prayers with his wife. She was soon converted under them, but his own religious anxieties were only deepened by the habit, till his "flesh wasted away like a garment fretted by the moth, and his bones were ready to start through his skin." While listening to Wesley in London, the peace of God dawned into his troubled mind. He abandoned his Sunday work as a baker, became a band-leader, a class-leader, a local preacher, and at last an itinerant. His employment allowed him no time for preaching, except what he took from his sleep, and for some time he slept but "about eight hours a week," preaching in the evening, working most of the night, and preaching again at five o'clock in the morning. He gave himself fully to the ministry in 1757, walking a hundred and fifty miles

[21] Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. i, p. 426.
[22] Life of Mather. Ibid.

to his first circuit. During his first year he was thoroughly initiated into the trials of his new life. A mob, accompanied by a drum, attacked him while he was addressing a crowd in the market-place at Boston. He was pursued a mile out of the town, dirt and stones "flying like hail on every side." He attempted to return for his horse, but was knocked down and beaten till his breath was nearly gone. On recovering himself he endeavored to go on, but was a second time prostrated by the rioters. They allowed him at last to crawl over a ditch, but one of them again seized him by the collar to drag him to the horse-pond, while others plastered him over with dirt. He was now in a sad plight; his Scotch spirit would have resented these wrongs, but that would not befit his Christian character, so he submitted and would probably have perished, had not a gentleman interfered as the mob were about to cast him into the pond. While he walked through the town they followed him, throwing dirt from the kennels into his face; when out of breath, he would stop and calmly face them during a few moments of rest, for they "seldom looked him in the face." He was struck near the temple by a stone. At the inn some of his friends washed his wounds; but when he mounted his horse to go on his way, he was assailed by a shower of missiles, and the welkin rang with the shouts of the rabble. The next day, however, he was in the town again, and, appealing to the laws, he compelled the reluctant magistrates to summon the leaders of the mob, and secured, by his coolness and determination, the right of preaching there when he pleased. This hard beginning made a hero of the cool-headed and strong-hearted Scotchman; he was resolute, but prudent, and mastered similar perils with courage and skill. At Wolverhampton his chapel was pulled down. Most of the windows of his friends' houses were broken, and it was hazardous for a Methodist to pass in the streets. The rioters marched with flying ribbons, were saluted with bells and bonfires, and burned Mather and one of his friends in effigy. The

mob, he says, "raged like wild beasts, and the whole country was in terror." Mounting his horse, at eighty miles distance, he rode into the town. His manful appeals to the magistrates alarmed them into some regard for their duty; he declared to an attorney, who had led the mob, and made the first breach in the chapel, that he must rebuild it or be tried for his life, and it was accordingly rebuilt. At Dudley, Darlaston, and Wednesbury—old theaters of riot, as we have seen—the Methodists were threatened by invasions of the rabble from other places; but "such powerful revivals" had prevailed in these towns that there were few left who would either join in persecutions or allow others to attempt them. The rioters approached Darlaston, but "a hog-butcher," who lived near the preaching-house, hearing the alarm, leaped out of bed, seized his cleaver, and running out, swore death to the first that should attack the building. So unexpected a reception quite discouraged them, and made them run away faster than they came.

During our present period Mather labored on extensive circuits with great success and many such conflicts. At Monmouth the churchwardens went before him into his chapel and shut the doors. Meantime the street was all in an uproar; but the mob opened to the right and left, and let him pass to the door. It was fast, but after some delay was opened to him, and he faced the wardens. One of them asked what authority he had to preach. Mather asked him who he was. "The churchwarden," was his reply. "Then you have no authority to question me," responded the itinerant; "I shall not show mine but to a proper person, and I desire you will either behave well or withdraw." Another said: "Sir, will you show it me? I am the chief constable." He answered, "I will." While the officer was reading, the churchwarden looked over him and said: "This will not do." "Sir, it will do for me," replied Mather; "and I require all of you who stay to behave in a becoming manner." The chief constable withdrew; but the crowd was so great that half could not get in, and those without were so

noisy that nothing could be heard. The mayor sent a summons to the preacher to attend him in the morning at the Town-hall, where a curious scene ensued. The mayor, the clerk of the peace, and all the chief men of the town assembled; the rector and curate used some harsh words, and the assembled dignitaries asked so many questions, and spoke so vehemently, that it was impossible to answer them. "Gentlemen," cried the itinerant, "be pleased to speak one at a time." But this could not be done. They all agreed in clamorously requiring him to promise that he would come there no more. "I told them," he says, "I would make no such promise; no, not if my life depended upon it." The ludicrous assembly broke up; they parted as they met, and the invincible Scotchman maintained his right to the ground, and the next day got safe to Bristol.

Still later he had equal trials at Paddiham. The society was erecting a chapel; but an enemy, pretending to a claim on the ground, tore down a part of the unfinished walls. Masons came at night and broke in the doors and windows, and attempted to prostrate the building, but becoming alarmed, ran away. A watch had to be appointed to guard the premises. A subsequent attack was made with crowbar and pickax, but some townsmen checked it. A battle ensued, and the "gentleman" opponent of the Methodists was rolled in the dirt. The persecutors were bound over to the assizes; but twenty-seven members of the society were summoned by a warrant before the justice of the peace. Mather's cool sense prevailed before the magistrate, the difficulty was adjusted, and, "the poor people went home in peace." Thomas Taylor, whose "adventures" at Glasgow have already been narrated, was about these times, and in this same town, thrice pulled down from his outdoor pulpit by a clergyman, who led the mob, arrayed in his gown and cassock.

Mather did much during these years for the promotion of the Methodist doctrine of Sanctification on his long and laborious circuits. "It was," says Benson, "his chief sup-

port under the many trials he met with from affliction and pain, from mobs, by scoffs and insults, by dirt, stones, and brickbats." He endured and labored on through the century, and closed it at last, as we shall see, with a death of triumph befitting his heroic life. Wesley ordained him with his own hands, and made him a "superintendent," or bishop[23] of his societies.

The early Methodist records speak of a young man who, about the beginning of this decade, stood on the steps of the Town-hall of Bishop's Castle, proclaiming to a large crowd, as his text, "Seek the Lord and ye shall live." The town was wicked to a proverb. He gathered his congregation by the public crier, whom he paid for the purpose. Some of the throng threw their hats in his face, but the tears trickled from the eyes of others, and "the power of the Highest reached many hearts."

The preacher had been a Cornish miner; he was devoutly disposed from his infancy, and bore in his memory, as one of his earliest recollections, the image of his "old grandmother lifting up her hands and eyes in prayer as she passed into the eternal world." The Methodist itinerants penetrated to his native town of Sancreed, and preached in his father's house. They talked with the boy about divine things, and he never forgot their simple instructions. He heard one of them preach, who appeared to keep his eye fixed upon him, and whose every word seemed to be directed to him. He was plunged for some time in deep distress; but, while praying in secret, the words, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven," flashed upon his awakened conscience, and "in that instant," he says, "my burden was removed, and my soul was filled with peace and joy." He was soon after impressed for the navy, but a good Quaker was passing at the moment, and, struck by the expressive innocence of his youthful face, pleaded with the magistrate to save him from the temptations of the sea, and thus rescued him for the Methodist ministry. He studied the doctrine of Christian

[23] Myles's Chron. Hist., p. 175; Smith's Hist. Meth., vol. i, p. 580.

Perfection, and, with his pious mother, consecrated himself to a life of entire holiness. The dark mines in which he toiled were sanctuaries of prayer to him, and his life was saved in one of the perils which frequently attend that employment, by the fact that he was upon his knees at the moment of the accident. He had knelt but about two minutes when the earth gave way above him; a large stone fell before him and reached above his head; another fell at his right hand, and a third on his left, each, like the first, being higher than himself; a fourth fell upon these, about four inches above him, and sheltered him. Had he been in any other posture than that of his devotions, he would, he says, "have been crushed to pieces." But he was able to breathe through the crevices of the superincumbent rocks, and pray on till the mass was removed, when he was brought safely out, rejoicing and giving thanks to God.

More than ever did he now devote himself to Christian usefulness, till we find him standing on the Town-hall steps of Bishop's Castle, in a wondering crowd, with his Bible in his hand.

Such was the early history of Richard Rodda, a man of precious memory in many parts of England.[24] He labored with great success and frequent persecutions during these times. At Tenbury he was resisted on the charge of "coming there to preach against the Church." The greatest confusion prevailed in the assembly. Some of the rioters brought powder, and filled the place with its sulphurous smoke; but a rough, honest countryman, who had come through curiosity to hear the preaching, and sat near Rodda, with a large bludgeon in his hand, rose from his seat when he heard the explosion, and, with terrible oaths, swore he would "knock out the brains" of the disturbers if they repeated the offense. The preacher had scarcely less trouble to pacify him than to control the mob. When Rodda appeared in the town again he sent the public crier around to announce preaching in the open air. The rabble gathered

[24] Life of Rodda, in Early Methodist Preachers, vol. ii.

about his lodgings half an hour before the time, and when they saw him through the windows, shouted "There he is." Rodda threw up the sash and said, "I am here, and will be with you soon." At the appointed hour he "went out in the strength of the Lord." Some of the throng pelted him with dirt and broken tiles, but they neither hurt nor hin dered him. Before he ended his sermon the rioters got a piece of wood, dressed it like a man, and, putting an old wig on its head, danced it up and down before him; "but," says the good man, "I looked up to God, and was preserved from levity, and the mob from this time became more civilized."

Day after day he had such encounters. At Hereford he took his stand with his back against St. Nicholas' Church, and gathered a congregation by singing a hymn; several gentlemen and two or three clergymen were among them. A baker confronted him passionately with the charge of preaching against the Church, but soon retreated. Some of the rabble tried to throw a pail of milk upon him, but failed in the attempt. Others threw mud into his face and eyes. "It so besmeared me," he says, "that I could proceed no farther." The mob thought they had conquered him, but were disappointed; he cited the chief persecutor before the magistrate; returned subsequently, and was never defeated again.

Throughout this period he labored, with almost invariable success, in Cornwall, in Wales, and in Oxfordshire. "The power of God," he says, "was with me 'both to wound and to heal.'" The cries and prayers of his hearers often constrained him to stop in his sermons and mingle his tears and supplications with theirs. He sometimes brought to the Conference reports of a hundred increase, for the year, in single appointments of his circuit. On his Oxfordshire circuit there was such an awakening among the people as the oldest men living could not remember.

The itinerants of that day suffered not only from mobs, but from exposure to rain and cold, from poor food and damp

beds. Richard Rodda fell at last by an attack of asthma, produced by such hardships. After forty-five years of ministerial labors and sufferings he could say, while gasping for breath, "I could go to Smithfield and die for the Lord Jesus; I know I could." "I suffer much, but God is with me. It is now about fifty-eight years since the Lord set my soul at glorious liberty, and I have found him to be a gracious God all the way, faithful to his promise. Not one word hath failed. Glory be to his name! Do not pray for my restoration, or for life. For why should I live when my work is done? Let me enter into the joy of my Lord."

Such are but examples of what were still no uncommon trials of Wesley's humble "helpers." They were the right class of men to rescue the neglected people from their demoralization. They had come from among the people, and knew how to address them; they knew their vices, could sympathize with their wretchedness, and bear patiently their outrages. They seldom or never abandoned any place because of its hostility, but persisted till they conquered—till they gathered societies, and erected simple, but comfortable chapels among the degraded habitations of their reclaimed persecutors. They suffered much from poverty, for few of the circuits yet afforded them competent support, but they shared gladly the hard fare of the people. Not a few of them, unable to obtain horses, walked their long "rounds," preaching from village to village. John Pritchard, who wore himself out in the ministry, writes to Wesley, toward the end of this period, that his horse became sick, and being poor—"for a Methodist preacher is likely to be so as long as he lives"—and the people of his circuit poor also, he had traveled, during the winter and spring, on foot about twelve hundred miles. "Meantime," he added, "whatsoever I parted with on earth was made up to me in Christ and his people; my love for them was so great that I could have willingly died to promote their welfare."[25]

[25] Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. iii, p. 465.

They were not content with confronting mobs, and preaching from day to day, but sought out the perishing poor in their lowly homes. They were instant in season, and, as most men would think, out of season also, with the word of exhortation, when they met them in the streets and on the highways. One of these faithful laborers, writing to Wesley of his ministerial work about this time, speaks of pressing through the wintry storms on foot when the snow was knee deep. He stops to pray with a young man on a mountain side; he meets farther on a rude traveler and his wife plodding their way. "Lord," cries the good man in his heart, "what shall I say to these, thy creatures, to induce them to serve thee?" And saying a great deal to them about Christ and eternity, he begs them to kneel down with him that he may pray with them. The poor and miserable instinctively know how to appreciate men whom they thus see in earnest for their welfare, and suffering privations and toils greater than their own to secure it. The two travelers knelt down on the earth with the itinerant while he "wrestled with God for them," and when they rose the astonished man felt himself unworthy to shake the hand of the preacher, and the woman, with flowing tears, bowed and kissed it. Such is the human heart when rightly touched. "O how willingly would I have washed the feet of those poor creatures for whom Christ died!" says the evangelist; and he could write from his laborious circuit, that "since the Conference I have been completely happy, and have found rest in all circumstances, both as a Christian and as a preacher; whether going by the way-side, or lying down, or rising up, the Lord has been my portion, and satisfies my soul with the treasures of his house."[26] Such facts illustrate the men, their work, and their times, better than any general remarks. Sacrificing all things for Christ, and living in daily view of heaven, how could these men be otherwise than blessed? Their very afflictions were a part of their fellowship with Christ—the "fellowship of his sufferings;"

[26] Arminian Magazine, 1788.

and they had a right to feel that they were walking in his footsteps, "going about doing good."

While Wesley and his hosts of itinerants were thus pursuing their evangelical toils, some of his veterans, exhausted by travel and suffering, had to retire from the ranks, while others fell at their posts. He has commemorated some of the latter in his Journal.

In 1744 John Downes fell in the pulpit at West-street Chapel, London, while preaching from the text, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," and spoke no more till his spirit returned unto God. "I feel such a love for the people of West-street," he said, before he went to the chapel, "that I could be content to die with them, and must be with them this evening." His voice failing, he sank upon his knees in the desk, and was found in that posture by those who bore him to his home. "O for a death like this!" wrote Charles Wesley; "it is the most enviable, the most desirable I ever heard of." He left a widow, and but one sixpence of property.[27] He had fought a good fight through thirty-one years of itinerant life; had preached in nearly all parts of the United Kingdom; had been fiercely persecuted, impressed as a soldier, and imprisoned in Lincoln jail. It was befitting that he should die so sublimely. He was a man of great character and great and various talents. Wesley dares to compare his mathematical genius with that of Sir Isaac Newton.[28] Without education as an artist, he drew and engraved the portrait of Wesley, which was prefixed to his "Notes on the New Testament." For several months before his death he enjoyed far deeper communion with God than ever he had before; and for some days he had frequently said, "I am so happy that I scarce know how to live. I enjoy such fellowship with God as I thought could not be had on this side heaven." "After a long conflict with pain, sickness, and poverty, he gloriously rested from his labors," says Wesley, "and entered into the joy of his Lord."

[27] Moore's Life of Wesley, book vii, chap. 3. [28] Journal, 1774.

In the same year a striking spectacle was seen in the streets of Leeds. Charles Wesley's unrivaled funeral lyrics had spread over England, and as all families know, sooner or later, the sadness of death, they had become generally known. They were heard at the death-beds of most Methodists, and it had grown into a custom among them to carry their dead along the highways singing these pathetic but exultant dirges. Amid thousands of spectators, a procession nearly half a mile long,[29] sobbing and singing, bore the remains of the heroic John Nelson through the town of Leeds, and along the highway, to lay him to rest in his native village of Birstal, the place of his first ministrations and greatest triumphs. Aged men who remembered and shared his earliest trials, and children who had heard the story of them told at the fireside by their fathers, followed him to the grave as a grateful people follow a fallen hero who has helped to save their country. Leeds had seldom or never witnessed a more affecting scene.

The extraordinary life and character of this truly noble man have already been given with some detail in our narrative, and need not here be reviewed. It is sufficient to say that perhaps no lay preacher, ever raised up by Methodism, has presented a better exemplification of what such an evangelist should be, a more admirable example of heroism, of magnanimity, good sense, sound piety, hard work, and courageous suffering. He was steadfast in his ministerial labors for thirty-three years. As Whitefield said of himself, Nelson had spoken so much for Christ in life that it was not necessary he should add anything in dying. He died suddenly. Returning to his lodgings, from the home of one of his brethren, he was seized with sickness, soon became insensible, and, before the sun went down, departed to his eternal rest. A humble mason, pursuing his craft by day and preaching at night, Nelson nevertheless became a thorough English gentleman, in the best sense of that phrase. Wesley attached no slight importance to that "respectability" which grows out of

[29] Wes. Meth. in Congleton Circuit, chap. 2.

good manners, appropriate dress, and self-respect. It had no small moral value in his estimation. He promoted it among his people, and especially among his preachers. A public teacher should be, in his opinion, a model gentleman, as, in his "Address to the Clergy," he pronounced St. Paul to have been. He directed his preacher at Edinburgh to come down, with his family, out of the upper stories of an obscure and dirty quarter of the city, to a residence more suitable to the dignity of his office, and more favorable to his influence among the people. After dining with a company of Moravian missionaries, who had assembled in London, to depart thence on their destinations to various parts of the world, he records his admiration of the good sense of the fraternity in selecting for its foreign messengers men, not only of piety and talents, but of cultivated manners, of good mien, and even of good features. Both by example and precept did he teach his preachers to add to their higher virtues these minor advantages, until he rendered them, what they have ever since been, in their Conference assemblies, one of the most respectable-looking bodies of men to be seen in their country. John Nelson's good sense could reconcile Christian humility and self-sacrifice with this self-respect. The native magnanimity of his character was rendered the more commanding by his good manners, his noble bearing, his decent attention to dress and to all desirable appearances. Personally, he would have given dignity to any archiepiscopal throne of the realm. Among the hundreds of clerical portraits in the Arminian or Wesleyan Magazine, none equal his in nobleness of person, tasteful simplicity of dress, manliness of attitude, and the repose, strength, and benignity of his features.[30] Methodism was a great blessing to his family as well as to himself; his wife became an intelligent class-leader, and two of their descendants useful preachers.[31]

[30] It is given in the octavo edition of the first volume of this history.

[31] John Nelson, his grandson, joined Wesley's Conference in 1789, and was for more than forty years a laborious and eminently successful minis-

Another death among his fellow-laborers, recorded by Wesley during these times, was that of Silas Told, a name that may appropriately be associated with that of John Nelson. A very notable character was this "honest Silas Told"—a reclaimed sailor, who became pre-eminently the good Samaritan of London, the real though unrecognized chaplain of all its then wretched prisons, and of most within ten miles around it. He went to sea in his childhood, and passed through astonishing adventures, which he has recorded, with frank and affecting simplicity, in a style of terse and flowing English that De Foe might have envied. He was drowned, and with difficulty restored to life; he was shipwrecked, taken by pirates, and spent years among the horrible atrocities of the slave-trade, and perhaps no record of those abominations is more appalling than that which he has given. Tired of a wayward and vicious life, he married a virtuous young woman, and settled in an honest business in London. An apparently accidental but really providential incident there brought him into connection with the Methodists of the Foundry, and led him into a career of usefulness which has not been excelled by any city missionary or prison chaplain since his day. A poor young Methodist applied to him for employment, but was repelled with rudeness, which he bore with so much Christian meekness that the naturally generous heart of the sailor relented. The pious youth was called back and employed. He led Told to hear Wesley at the Foundry; the sailor's wife soon went thither also; and after no small amount of objections, rude polemics, and religious anxieties, both became devoted and happy Methodists. Family prayer was introduced into their simple home; and Told, who had received some early education, and had taught school a short time after leaving the seas, now became an intelligent if not talented man. His career thus far would have furnished an interesting example of the power of Methodism

ter of Christ. William Nelson was a local preacher in Leeds: see Treffry's Memoir of Rev. John Smith, p. 34, Am. ed.

to reclaim the lowest classes of men; but he could not stop at this point. We have seen that there were desks for a school, at one end of the Band-room, in the Foundry chapel. Told, at the direction of Wesley, sacrificed his business to take charge of a few charity children there, with ten shillings a week for his salary. He speedily collected threescore boys and six girls. He worked at his task from five in the morning till five in the evening. More than seven years did he spend in these useful labors, training nearly three hundred boys, "most of whom were fitted for almost any trade."

Attending with his scholars at one of Wesley's five o'clock morning sermons, the text—"I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not"—struck the heart and conscience of the generous mariner. He sunk even into despondency for several days, under the impression that he had neglected the sufferers of Newgate, and he resolved thenceforth to do his duty toward them; but he knew not the measures requisite to be pursued for his good purpose.

A devout Methodist woman who visited the prisons, soon reported to him that ten men, in one of them, were about to die. He found them out, got them together in one cell, and preached to them repentance and hope, declaring that "the King of heaven had laid down his life for the chief of sinners," that "he certainly died for them," and quoting the examples of the repentance and salvation of David, Mary Magdalene, Peter, and the thief on the cross. Eight of these criminals were hung at once, Told riding with them in the cart, and praying for them under the gallows. His faithful ministrations had led them all to repentance, and they died with contrite hope of the mercy of God.

Having thus begun his new career of usefulness, he never slackened in it till he was called to his reward in heaven. For more than thirty years no man was better known, or more welcome in all the prisons of the metropolis and the neighboring towns, than Silas Told. All sorts of criminals, Papists and Protestants, educated men, officers of the army and navy, as well as the poor, who had no other

friend, not only respected him, but clung to him in their anguish for counsel and consolation. He seems to have had, by his deep piety and his sailor-like generosity and simplicity, a peculiar power over the rudest minds. Notwithstanding no little opposition at first, from not only prisoners, but keepers, and "ordinaries," or chaplains, he persisted till he won his way; for through "all this," he writes, "I burst the more vehemently, so that I became, in the name of God, resolute in that point, and would take no denial." Turnkeys, sheriffs, hangmen, wept as they witnessed his exhortations and prayers. They sent for him when new cases occurred which his tireless zeal had not yet discovered. They opened passages through the clamorous and ribald crowds to the gallows for him; hardened men, as they usually were, they came to know and love him as the good Samaritan whom death alone could separate from the objects of his sympathy. The ordinaries of the prisons, who often read their prayer books as a mere ceremony on these harrowing occasions, seem to have been his chief opposers. During three years, one of them frequently stationed himself, on Sunday mornings, a few doors from Newgate, to obstruct his entrance; and, breaking up a society of thirty members which he had formed among the poor debtors, stopped his preaching on that side of the prison; but he still found access to the capital felons, and he formed another Methodist society of thirty-six members among the debtors, who were brought under such discipline that "they would not suffer any individual among them to live in any outward sin." He preached in every prison, as well as many workhouses, in and about London, and frequently traveled to almost every town within twelve miles of the metropolis.

It is dangerous for a historian of Methodism to read his extraordinary autobiography; if the temptation to quote too largely its affecting incidents can be resisted, still his eye and hand risk their capacity for the task of the day, after tracing its heart-breaking tale of sorrows. Few if any

records show more shockingly the state of the prisons and of the penal laws, and the barbarous concomitants of the executions of that age; yet few more strikingly prove the beneficent influence which, since the epoch of Methodism, has been exerted by the improved Christianity of England, on her prison discipline and on her whole social life.[32] The enormous number of capital condemnations, the haste of the judicial process in such cases, the indisposition of the responsible government officers to inquire into them, occasioned by their social distance, led to appalling abuses of

[32] I am tempted to quote, as not altogether irrelevant to my pages, a case which affords an example of the executions of those demoralized times, as well as a singular coincidence. The victim was one of eight who were hung at the same time, a poor, miseducated young man, who had sincerely repented, and died with Christian hope. "John Lancaster," says Told, "had no friend to procure him a proper interment; so that, when they had hung the usual time, and were cut down, the surgeons' mob secured the body of Lancaster, and carried it over to Paddington. When the crowd was nearly dispersed, a company of eight sailors, with truncheons in their hands, looked up to the gallows with an angry countenance, the bodies having been cut down some minutes previous to their arrival. An old woman who sold gin observing them to grow violent, by reason of their disappointment, mildly said unto them, 'Gentlemen, I suppose you want the man that the surgeons have got.' 'Ay,' replied the sailors, 'where is he?' The poor affrighted woman gave them to understand that the surgeons' crew had carried him over to Paddington, and pointed out to them the road thither. On this they hastened away, and as they entered the town, inquired where the surgeons' mob was? On receiving information, they went and demanded the body of John Lancaster. When they had obtained it, two of them took it on their shoulders, and carried it round by Islington. They being tired, two others placed themselves under the body, and carried it from Shoreditch to Coverlet's-fields. At length, after they were weary, they agreed to lay it on the step of the first door they came to. They did so, and went their way. This gave birth to a great riot in the neighborhood, which brought an old woman, who lived in the house, down stairs. When she saw the corpse on the step of the door, she cried out, 'Lord, here is my son, John Lancaster!' This being spread abroad, the Methodists made a collection, and got him a shroud and a coffin. This circumstance was the more extraordinary, as the seamen had no knowledge of the body, or to whom he belonged when living." (Arminian Mag., 1788, p. 68.) The state of the police, as well as of the morals of that age, are hardly conceivable to a modern citizen of London, notwithstanding the actual vice and suffering of the great metropolis.

the law, and to frequent and agonizing sufferings in instances of comparative and sometimes of complete innocence. Told was often the only comforter of such victims, the only man who fully ascertained their degree of guilt or their entire innocence. He wept with them, and followed them with his blessing to the grave, and remained sometimes the sole protector of their wretched families. He gives but occasional examples, yet too many for a man of sensibility to read. One of them was a young and guiltless woman, apparently amiable and Christian in her character. Told besought her, on the morning of her execution, to confess if she were guilty, warning her that there was no hope for her beyond the grave if she did not. She answered him "with meekness and simplicity," protesting her innocence. She was brought out amid the shouting scoffs of the crowd, and placed in a room, where she stood against the wall, a statue of sorrow but resignation, and with no friend but the sympathetic mariner, and the executioner, who "thanked God, with tears," that the good Methodist "had come." Borne thence to Kennington Common in a cart, the populace jeered at the helpless maiden with oaths and obscenity, mistaking her religious resignation for hardness of heart. The popular fury was so great that in order to protect Told from it, the sheriff, who rode by the side of the cart, directed him to take hold of the bridle of his horse, and walk between him and the victim. He thus accompanied her to the gallows, comforting her as they went. "My dear, look to Jesus," cried the good man. She lifted her eyes, and joyfully said, "Sir, I bless God that I can look to Jesus, to my comfort." Under the gallows he prayed with her; her conversation with him there respecting the murder, heard by the sheriff, convinced the latter of her innocence. "Good God!" exclaimed the officer, weeping, "it is another Coleman's case." But it was too late for redress. The cart was drawn from under her, and Told, standing by her to the last, had the wretched consolation of knowing that she died without a struggle, for her body dropped

against his side. He published the facts which proved to him that she was not guilty.

He relates another illustration of the times, the case of a poor but virtuous man who was "*hung for a sixpence.*" With a sick wife, a little daughter, and without money, or a place to sleep in, being turned out of his house by a creditor, the friendless sufferer went down to the quay, saying, as he left his wife, "It may be the Lord will provide me with a loaf of bread or some employment." He failed, and a "sudden temptation entered his mind" to obtain relief for his perishing family by robbery. He accosted two women in Hoxton Fields and demanded money. One gave him two pence, the other fourpence. Scarcely knowing what he did, he walked before them into the city, when they related the fact to a policeman, and the starved and bewildered man was immediately thrust into prison. His wretched wife found him there, as did also the volunteer missionary. "During many years that I attended the prisoners," says the latter, "I have not seen such meek and loving spirits as appeared in the countenance and deportment of this poor man and his wife. Indeed, they were naturally inclined to few words; but the woman frequently seating herself by her husband's side, and throwing her arms round his neck, they would shed floods of tears to mitigate the anguish which overwhelmed them."

The suffering man confessed his crime, wept bitter tears of repentance, and died with more than resignation. When an appeal was made for him to the Privy Council, he was hastily confounded with a noted highwayman of the same name, and sent to the scaffold. His wife, terrified by the merciless scene, slunk away in despair. He could not, on the morning of his execution, inform Told where to find her, but the latter "spent three days in groveling through almost every dirty alley of Bishopsgate-street," till he discovered her in a miserable room with a "poor old woman, and with no other furniture than a piece of an old rug, whereon they both laid themselves to sleep." He told her

sad story to a Methodist society, after preaching, and obtained their alms for her. In the midst of her many sorrows she was about to give birth to another child. After being repelled by several churchwardens, to whom he applied for a recommendation for her admission to a hospital, Told procured her shelter in one of those asylums. On her recovery he took her to his own home, clothed her, and "as she was a woman of sobriety and cleanliness," obtained a "housekeeper's place" for her and a home for her child.

Let it not be said that these "simple annals of the poor," however interesting in themselves, are irrelevant to our narrative; they show the character and usefulness of Told better than could pages of eulogy; they exhibit the times better than could chapters of dissertation; they teach the grateful lesson of our obligations to that revived Christianity which, while it has banished the tumultuous vices of Moorfields, has also, to a great extent, though not yet entirely, suppressed these horrors of Newgate and the English penal laws; and if they shall tend to enforce the example of the Wesleys and their associates, in visiting those who are "sick and in prison,"—a common habit of the Methodists of that age—they may well be pondered with tears by the Methodists of ours. Silas Told continued his good work till he tottered, on his missions of mercy, under the weight of nearly seventy years, and "having done all the good in his power, he cheerfully resigned his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father in December, 1778." [33]

It was befitting that Wesley himself should lay in the grave this noble fellow-laborer. On the 20th of December, 1778, he records in his Journal: "I buried what was mortal of honest Silas Told. For many years he attended the malefactors in Newgate without fee or reward, and I suppose no man, for this hundred years, has been so successful in that melancholy office. God had given him peculiar talents for it, and he had amazing success therein.

[33] Arminian Magazine, 1788, p. 406.

The greatest part of those whom he attended died in peace, and many of them in the triumph of faith." [34]

While some of the most notable of Wesley's coadjutors were thus falling in their work, more were rising to take their places. To them let us now turn.

[34] Wesley's Works, vol. iv, p. 501. I congratulate myself on the opportunity of reviving the memory of Silas Told, a man of such exemplary usefulness, but whose name (among American Methodists, at least) has nearly been forgotten in the later and stirring events of Methodism. Wesley published, with a preface, his autobiography: "The Life of Silas Told: Written by Himself," (18mo., pp. 113. London: 1790;) a book which, with some editing, might do much good in our times, and which could not fail to be "popular." Southey (Life of Wesley, chap. 29) refers to Told, with no other good word than an acknowledgment of his "honest zeal." He takes occasion, at the same time, to say that "the Wesleys do not appear to have repeated their visits after their early exclusion from the prisons, and that the early Methodists generally abandoned such good works." The intimation is utterly false; the Methodist writings of the times abound in records of such labors; the Conference of 1778, some months before the death of Told, formally recognized it as a duty of the preachers to visit the prisons; Wesley preached at Newgate when above eighty years old, while nearly half a hundred men under sentence of death (such was the hanging of that day!) wept around him: Charles Wesley visited Newgate and other prisons, and his last publication was a pamphlet of poetical "Prayers for Condemned Malefactors,' which he said had been answered "on nineteen malefactors, who all died penitent" at one time.

CHAPTER V.

CONFERENCES FROM 1770 TO 1780.

Change in the Character of the "Minutes"—Conference of 1771—Francis Asbury—Sketch of Benson, the Commentator—The Session of 1772—Statistics—Session of 1773—America—Session of 1774—Further News from America—Sketch of Samuel Bradburn, the Methodist Demosthenes—Characteristic Incident—James Rogers—His early Piety—He receives Encouragement from a reclaimed Vagrant—Is converted—Goes about "exhorting"—Preaches to his Family—Encounters a mob—Joins the Conference—Conference of 1775—Examination of Preachers' Characters—Duncan M'Allum—John Valton—Conference of 1776—Session of 1777—Conference Obituaries begun—Condition of the Societies—John Helton turns Quaker—Fletcher—A Session in Ireland—Rev. Edward Smyth—Separation from the Church opposed—Conference of 1778—Missions—Dr. Coke—He is "chimed" out of his Church—Is threatened by a Mob—Joins Wesley—His Character—He becomes the first Protestant Bishop of the New World—Conference of 1779—Scotland—Sketch of Henry Moore—He is mobbed in Dublin—Conference of 1780—Results of this Decade.

Down to the Conference of 1770 we have been able to observe, in the Annual Minutes, the gradual development of the Theology and Economy of Arminian Methodism. The controversy occasioned by the anti-Calvinistic Minute of that session, seems to have rendered Wesley cautious of such necessarily brief and unqualified statements of doctrinal opinions. Excepting the conciliatory measures of the next session, respecting the obnoxious Minute, we find thenceforward scarcely an allusion to polemical questions in any of the proceedings down to his death. The Minutes became records of routine business, of statistics, finances, and "appointments"—dry outlines, which would hardly be readable could they not be relieved by personal and characteristic facts connected with their rolls of names. Happily such

facts are superabundant, and not only entertaining and even romantic, in many instances, but in the truest sense historical, as revealing the spirit of the Methodistic movement and of the times. It is probable that Wesley had already begun to think of a more convenient mode of discussing his doctrines in the periodical which he commenced before the expiration of this decade—the noted Arminian Magazine; or it may be that he deemed the theology of the Connection sufficiently defined in the discussions of past Conferences, in his own numerous writings, and in the controversial works of Fletcher.

The subject of chief interest at the twenty-eighth session, begun at Bristol, August 6, 1771, has already been amply reviewed in the account of the Calvinistic controversy.

There were received on probation at this Conference 8 preachers; 3 were continued on trial, and 15 were received into full membership; 125, including the Wesleys, were enrolled in the appointments.

Forty-eight circuits are recorded, a decrease of two, occasioned by the combination of those of Essex and Norfolk, and of Cheshire North and Cheshire South. The two circuits of Scotland, reported in 1770, were united under the title of Edinburgh and Aberdeen. A new circuit named Macclesfield was organized. As the united circuits were not diminished, but employed the same number of men as in the preceding year, there was really a gain of one circuit. Many of the old circuits were also greatly extended.

The number of members reported was 30,338,[1] the increase for the year was 872.

The collections for Kingswood School amounted to £230, for chapel debts to £1,665, and £63 were added to the

[1] "The Minutes of the Wesleyan Conferences," vol. i, p. 99, gives them as 31,340, but the figures were incorrectly summed up—an error which frequently occurs in that work. Even the numbering of the sessions is inaccurate for several years. Thomas Olivers, who had charge of Wesley's press, was noted for the abundance of his errata, and Wesley was compelled, at last, on this account, to remove him from that function to better work.

Preachers' Fund. A penny contribution was ordered to be taken throughout the Connection for the liquidation of the debts.

"Our brethren in America call aloud for help," said Wesley to the Conference; "who are willing to go over and help them?" Five responded and two were sent, Francis Asbury and Richard Wright. The first was destined, as we shall hereafter see, to become the chief hero of American Methodism, and one of the chief characters in American ecclesiastical history.

A name afterward eminently distinguished in the annals of Methodism, appeared this year, for the first time, on the roll of the Conference—that of Joseph Benson. He was born in Cumberland in 1748. His childhood was marked by seriousness, intelligence, and diligence in study, and he early acquired a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, and of Theology. While under ten years of age he formed the habit of secret prayer. He dates his regeneration in his sixteenth year. He had then become acquainted with Wesley's itinerants, who visited his native town; he believed that Methodism opened for him a career of great, and therefore of ennobling self-sacrifice, and resolved, the next year, to go to Newcastle, consult Wesley, whom he had not yet seen, and throw himself out upon such opportunities of usefulness as the great evangelist could afford him. His aged father accompanied him part of the way on foot; they separated on the highway "with a flood of tears," and never met again.[2] He did not find Wesley at Newcastle, but set out on foot, in mid-winter, to meet him in London. A generous man, hearing his design on the route, paid his coach fare to the city. Wesley took him to Kingswood, and appointed him classical master of its seminary. He remained in this office till, by Fletcher's influence, he was made head master at Trevecca College. We have noticed his labors and trials there, and his dismissal by the Countess of Huntingdon at the breaking out of the Cal-

[2] Treffry's Memoirs of Rev. Joseph Benson, chap. 1.

vinistic controversy. While at Kingswood he had entered his name at St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, and regularly "kept his terms," and at his dismissal from Trevecca he went to the University to complete his studies. Oxford had become noted for not only its hostile treatment of the original Methodists, but for its expulsion of the Methodist students of St. Edmund's Hall, in 1768, and Benson's relations with Wesley and Lady Huntingdon were now alleged against him at the University. His tutor declined to sign his testimonials for orders in the Church; on obtaining them from other and high sources, the Bishop of Worcester refused him ordination, and thus did the Establishment, in its relentless hostility to Methodism, cast away another of its sons, who might have become one of its chief ornaments. This treatment occasioned him much perplexity and depression; but he immediately went forth preaching in Wiltshire with great success. "The Lord," he writes, "scattered my doubts, and showed me more clearly the way of salvation by faith in Christ. I was not now anxious to know how I had resolved, or not resolved. I had the Lord with me in all things; my soul rejoiced in his love, and I was continually expecting him to fulfill in me all his good pleasure."

At the Conference of 1771 he was appointed to the London circuit, and thenceforward, for half a century, occupied the most important posts of English Methodism. He was twice President of the Conference, and from 1803 till his death, in 1821, was editor of the Methodist Magazine. His Biblical Commentary became the general study of Wesleyan preachers,[3] and, with his sermons and

[3] Horne (in his Introduction to the Critical Study of the Holy Scriptures) speaks highly of his Commentary. It was largely a compilation from Poole's Annotations. Poole extended his notes only to Isaiah, fifty-eighth chapter; his work was continued by other hands. With the exception of Genesis, Benson has mostly copied Poole as far as the latter went. Methodist writers were in the habit of abridging good authors for the use of their people. Benson acknowledged his indebtedness to Poole and other writers, but not with sufficient particularity to save him from malicious criticism.

numerous other writings, has contributed incalculably to that stability of theology and growth of intelligence which have characterized the Connection. He was noted for his accurate and profound acquaintance with the Greek New Testament, the soundness and breadth of his theological knowledge, his quiet dignity, the wisdom of his counsels, and the eloquence, at once thoughtful and fervid, of his preaching. Disposed to expository and grave discourse, a Demosthenic eloquence nevertheless often marked his perorations and shook his audiences as the storm shakes the forest.

On the 4th of August, 1772, began the twenty-ninth Conference: 4 candidates were admitted into membership and 11 were received on trial; 132 received appointments; 2 ceased to travel; the number of circuits was still 48. The returns of members amounted to 31,984, showing a gain of 1,646. The original centers of Methodism still maintained their numerical prominence. London reported 2,441 members; Bristol, 1,249; Cornwall, 2,453; Leeds and Birstal, (the scenes of John Nelson's early labors,) 2,981; Haworth, (the parish of Grimshaw,) 1,219; the Dales, 1,003; Newcastle, 1,747. All Scotland reported but about 700.

The collections for the "Connectional" funds amounted to £3,388.

The next session was held in London, August 3, 1773: 10 candidates were admitted to membership; 12 were received on trial; 3 members retired; 137 received appointments; the circuits were 48. The number of members was 33,272, and the increase for the year 1,288.

The collections for the Conference funds amounted to £2,549.

The plan presented by Wesley to the Conference of 1769, for the perpetuation of the lay ministry, in the event of his death,[4] was again discussed, and received the signatures of forty-seven members, many having signed it in 1769.

[4] See vol. i, book iv, ch. 6.

Thomas Rankin and George Shadford were sent, before the session, to America,[5] where Methodism was rapidly extending; its first native American preacher, William Watters, was called out in the preceding year, and its first Conference in the New World was held about a month before the present English session.

On the 9th of August, 1774, the thirty-first Conference assembled in Bristol: 5 candidates were admitted to membership; 15 were received on probation; 4 members located, among whom was Joseph Pilmoor, one of the first missionaries sent to America; 143 received appointments. The circuits had increased to 50, by the addition of Thirsk and Dundee. The members were reported at 35,612, showing an increase of 2,340.

The contributions to the Conference funds amounted to £895.

The signatures to the paper providing for the continuance of the ministry after the death of Wesley were increased to seventy-three.

Cheering news had arrived from America; its second annual Conference had been held in Philadelphia, (May 25,) and 7 preachers had been admitted on trial, and 5 into membership; a church had been erected in Baltimore, the Light-street chapel, renowned in the annals of American Methodism; 17 preachers were now in the field, and 14 circuits were formed, with 2,073 members, an increase of 913, nearly double the number of the preceding year.[6] Three preachers were dispatched to the farther South, whither Robert Williams had penetrated since the preceding Conference, and where he had been instrumental in the conversion of five or six hundred souls, and the formation of five or six circuits.

Among the names of probationers received by Wesley at this conference, are those of James Rogers and Samuel Brad-

[5] Sketches of the American missionaries will be given in the volumes relating to American Methodism.

[6] Bangs's Hist. of the M. E. Church, vol. i, book ii, ch. 1.

burn, both eminent men in the itinerant ministry for the remainder of their lives.

During forty years Samuel Bradburn was esteemed the "Demosthenes of Methodism." He was born at sea, in the Bay of Biscay; and one of his biographers represents his eloquence as resembling the sublimity of his native ocean, and the lofty and jutting rocks that overhang the stormy gulf which was the scene of his birth.[7] His family settled at Chester, where he learned the business of a shoe maker, and where Methodism reached him while yet a youth, and sent him forth on his long and distinguished career. He labored successfully as a local preacher during 1773, and, entering the itinerant ranks the present year, immediately commanded public attention by his extraordinary eloquence. His person was large and noble; he was attentive to his appearance, powdering his wig, and carrying Wesley's views of ministerial gentility rather too far. He was excessively given to humor, and for nearly half a century shared with Rowland Hill and Matthew Wilks, the imputation of nearly all the anecdotes of clerical eccentricity current in England. His peculiarities sometimes verged on insanity, and the records of the time allude obscurely to a period when a cloud enveloped him; but when his brethren recorded his death in their annual Minutes, they could say that "his ministry was owned of God for the salvation of many; he was considered not only one of the first preachers of the land, for all the higher powers of persuasive eloquence, but also a faithful laborer in the vineyard of the Lord."

His discourses are described as rich in sublimity, in mighty, grasping thoughts, and yet as presenting, in the strangest contrasts, an exhaustless wit. Dr. Adam Clarke, who knew him well, being asked for a description of his eloquence, replied: "I have never heard his equal; I can furnish you with no adequate idea of his powers as an orator; we have not a man among us that will support

[7] Wesleyan Centenary Takings, p. 178. London, 1840.

anything like a comparison with him. Another Bradburn must be created, and you must hear him for yourself, before you can receive a satisfactory answer to your inquiry."[8]

One of his hearers, himself distinguished as a popular orator, said on leaving the chapel, "We may apply to him, in an accommodated sense, what was said of our Lord: Never man spake like this man." His humor was usually genial, but could be satirical, and croakers and pretenders dreaded his repartees. He especially rebuked any lack of fidelity or heroism in Methodist preachers, whom he considered to be too much honored by their office to admit of complaints of suffering or self-sacrifice. Some of the young members of the Conference, in relating their ministerial experience, spoke too much, as he thought, about their having given up *all* for the ministry. As most of them had risen from occupations as humble as his own, he sprung up and responded, "Yes, dear brethren, some of you have had to sacrifice your all for the itinerancy; but we old men have had our share of these trials. As for myself, I made a double sacrifice, for I gave up for the ministry two of the best *awls* in the kingdom—a great sacrifice truly to become an embassador of God in the Church and a gentleman in society."

He shared the hostile encounters of his brethren with the mobs, and, it must be added, with the clergy of that day; but his adroit humor gave him peculiar advantage on such occasions. Methodism had been successfully repelled from a town on his circuit by rioters, under the direction of the parish clergyman, who was also a magistrate. Bradburn determined to secure the ground, and, being unknown in the town, sent a request to a few obscure Methodists who remained there, to announce that an out-door sermon would be delivered by a stranger at three o'clock on a given Sunday. The clergyman prepared his agents to arrest the preacher and disperse the assembly. Bradburn arrived at the place in

[8] Wakeley's Heroes of Methodism, p. 270. New York, 1857.

time to attend the morning service at the parish church, where his commanding and well-dressed person attracted respectful attention. He accosted the clergyman after the benediction, and thanked him for his discourse in so polite a manner as to win his immediate favor and an invitation to dinner. He was supposed to be a brother clergyman, and without doubt an important one, for his rare powers of conversation proved him to be no ordinary man. On rising from the table he intimated a curiosity to hear the Methodist sermon in the open air. The clergyman expressed himself happy to accompany him, for he intended, he remarked, to arrest the vagrant preacher and put a stop to such scenes. Bradburn induced him to give up his purpose, and proposed that they should allow the itinerant a candid hearing. They walked to the place and found a large assembly, but no preacher. After waiting some time, the clergyman was about to dismiss the crowd, as he supposed the preacher had taken warning and would not appear; but Bradburn suggested that it would be best not to disappoint the people, that it was a favorable opportunity of doing them good, and began to urge the clergyman to mount a large stone, on which the itinerant was to have stood, and "hold forth" to them himself, for certainly Christ or St. Paul would have done so. This home-directed and unexpected appeal took the parish priest by surprise; he could not well evade it; but, apologizing that he had no sermon in his pocket, he retorted it on his supposed brother clergyman. Bradburn gladly accepted the challenge, and, waiting not for further reasoning, stepped up on the stone and began the service by singing the first hymn of the Methodist collection, and, after praying, preached from the text, "Now I say unto you, refrain from these men and let them alone, for if this counsel or this work be of men it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God." The eloquent discourse, it is said, not only affected the people, but delighted their minister so much that he heartily thanked Bradburn for the well-man

aged deception, and to the day of his death, entertained the Methodist preachers at his house.[9]

There was a genuine pathos mixed with the sublimity and humor of this great man. He could weep with them who wept, and his incessant repartees were often accompanied with heart-touching tenderness. Samuel Bardsley, himself noted for eccentricity as well as piety, and, like Bradburn, of a gigantic size, was the "spiritual father" of the latter. Bradburn was once indulging his irrepressible humor somewhat to the disadvantage of his beloved friend, who checked him. "Recollect," said Bardsley, "that though you have many brethren you have but one father in the Gospel." Bradburn leaped from his seat, threw himself on the neck of his old friend, and with gushing tears, and the affectionate fondness of a child, replied, "The Lord knows that I love you in the Gospel next to my Saviour."

Such are a few of the reminiscences of Samuel Bradburn which are still floating about the Methodist world; time and the failure of records have left us little else of interest respecting him, but such incidents illustrate the man better than could the best portraitures of his character. His name is still a Methodist household word in England. He was as useful as eloquent, and his brethren proved their respect for him by electing him President of the Conference a few years after the death of Wesley.[10]

James Rogers is well known to Methodist readers by his autobiography,[11] but still more by the memoirs of his devoted wife, Hester Ann Rogers, who shared for many years his usefulness as well as his itinerant trials, and whose

[9] This story, which, with almost any other man than Bradburn, seems too good to be true, is related by Wakeley, (Heroes of Methodism, p. 277,) on the authority of George Brereton, a Wesleyan preacher.

[10] A volume of Bradburn's "Sermons, preached on Particular Occasions," was issued in London, 1817. They show no little vigor of thought and style; but his eloquence, like that of Whitefield, could not be printed. A memoir of him was published by a member of his family, but it was so imperfect as to prove unacceptable to his friends. No possible memoir could meet their expectations; such men cannot be reduced to type.

[11] In Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. ii.

saintly example has had an influence on the piety of Methodist women throughout the Connection. He was a Yorkshireman, and, like most of the preachers given by that county to Methodism, was mighty in word and work.

His inquiring mind was subject to deep religious impressions as early as his third year. The conversations of his humble neighbors on religious topics, at his father's fireside, kept him out of bed till late hours, "through his desire to hear what might be said upon such subjects." He formed a plan of religious life, saying faithfully his prayers, abstaining from recreations on the Sabbath, telling no falsehoods, quarreling with no school-fellows, and attending punctually the parish church. But these virtues afforded no rest to his mind. His father dying in his eleventh year, he was placed among strangers, when a singular incident brought to him a knowledge of Methodism. One of his companions, "a wild young man," ran away from his parents to seek adventures on the seas; on arriving at Northampton he got into the company of a few Methodists, was reclaimed, joined their society, and soon after returned to his father's house, thoroughly zealous for the introduction of Methodism among his friends. "His old acquaintances," says Rogers, "flocked to see him upon his arrival, and expected feasting, merriment, and, as they call it, great doings. But the tables were now turned. He began to exhort us all to 'flee from the wrath to come,' enforcing the necessity of repentance and the new birth, stating that old things must be done away, and all things become new; and he observed that, instead of gluttony, drinking, singing, and dancing, we ought rather to fall upon our knees, and give God thanks for all his benefits. They gaped and stared at him as a monster; and some of them came near him no more, swearing he was turned Methodist, that his brain was hurt, and that if they did not keep from him he would convert them all, and make them as mad as himself."

Such incidents were of frequent occurrence in the early progress of Methodism, but this one took the villagers by

surprise. Young Rogers, who had been secretly praying among them for light, made known his anxieties to the reclaimed youth, who "rejoiced over him as one who had found great spoil." "From that time," he adds, "I date my acquaintance with the people of God, and to this day I have preferred them to all others."

The nearest Methodist society was eight miles distant; the itinerants preached there once a fortnight, on Tuesday nights; the road to it was difficult, and extended over mountains, but Rogers wended his way thither faithfully, winter and summer. He remained, nevertheless, without a "sense of the forgiveness of his sins till he removed to Whitby, where he could take no rest day or night" till he sent for a class-leader in the town, who, kneeling in prayer on the floor, wrote him a note admitting him to the society. Among these earnest Christians he soon "entered into rest." After more than thirty years of labors and sufferings he says of the hour of his deliverance: "While I now recollect it, my overflowing heart and eyes almost forbid my proceeding. In that moment my burden was gone; my heart was brought out of bondage into glorious liberty, and the love which I felt for God and all mankind was inexpressibly great. I was constrained to cry with David, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.'"

It was not long before he was diligently at work, exhorting and praying with his neighbors. He set off to visit his kindred, who were now at a considerable distance. They assembled at one of their homes to hear him, and standing up in their midst in his father's house, he faithfully warned them to flee from the wrath to come. All seemed astonished, and some were much affected. In fine, like John Nelson on a similar occasion, he had become a preacher. At a second meeting among his relatives, such was the effect of his exhortation, that the house was filled with groans and cries, and his sister-in-law professed to receive the pardon of her sins upon the spot. He went

forth among the villages around Whitby, and "stood in the open streets to warn sinners." He formed the first Methodist society in Lythe, "a wicked place," and obtained for it the services of a traveling preacher once a month.

Few of the Methodist preachers of that day had escaped the persecutions of mobs, and the continual and fiery fight of affliction which they thus endured, would be incredible in our times, were it not attested by facts so numerous that their frequent occurrence risks the interest of the reader, however exciting they may be. If they were not a necessary, they were at least a salutary part of the discipline of the itinerant ministry. This zealous Yorkshireman had a thorough initiatory experience of them. His success at Lythe roused the rabble, who collected at the door of one of his meetings to attack him and his brethren. Their number was great, and he had no sooner dismissed the assembly than the assault was begun. Hearing the noise, he pushed forward from the pulpit, and got into the midst of them. They saluted him with volleys of oaths and showers of stones and dirt, and in less than two minutes fell to blows. One of the stoutest of them advanced, with eyes gleaming with fury, and made several strokes at his head, but he received them upon his left arm, which was much bruised. When the assailant could not bring him to the ground, he was enraged, and watching his opportunity, while Rogers was endeavoring to rescue one of his friends, whom they were beating, the ruffian came behind him and gave him such a blow on his right temple that he staggered like a drunken man. His hat fell off, and his senses were confused, so that he must have fallen had the blow been repeated. This, doubtless, would have been done, but in that moment a pious young girl, who had lately joined the society, thinking he was much hurt, took up a stone and defended him. The assailant left the preacher to revenge himself upon the child; he seized a stone, two pounds in weight, and threw it with such violence at her face that she fell to the ground and lay

motionless. She was supposed to be dead, and was carried home to her mother's house; and though she recovered, she was severely cut, having her cheek laid open to the bone, and "bore this mark of suffering for her Lord's sake to her dying hour." Others of the society were hurt. One, in particular, had his face almost covered with blood; and his coat, waistcoat, and shirt torn half way down his back. "It is probable," adds Rogers, "that we might have come worse off still, had not God taken our part; for 'as the stars in their courses fought against Sisera,' so the Lord struck our enemies with terror, by sending, in that very moment, dreadful flashes of lightning from a cloud, which seemed to burst over their guilty heads. Finding an opportunity, while they were terrified, we endeavored to escape, but retreated gradually, as some of our people were old and infirm, and we were not willing to leave them in the rear, lest they should become a prey." The next day he found means to bring some of the ringleaders to justice, and they disturbed him no more.

He kept his ground among these poor people for about two years, and then set out on foot, in the depth of winter, for a journey of a hundred miles in circumference, preaching wherever he found an opportunity. Wesley could not lose such a man, and at the present session James Rogers took his place in the Conference, and thenceforward labored, in all parts of the United Kingdom, one of the most heroic of Methodist itinerants. We have seen him receiving an extempore sacrament from the hands of Fletcher, at the house of Ireland, near Bristol. He had great success in Ireland and Scotland. He traveled with Wesley in his last journey, and stood by the bedside of the dying patriarch. He possessed a vigorous understanding, a quenchless zeal, eminent holiness of heart and life, and died in triumph after more than thirty-five years of ministerial toils and sufferings.

The Conference of 1775 began, at Leeds, August 1st: 9 candidates were admitted to probation, and 20 proba-

tioners to membership; 2 members desisted from traveling. Scarborough was added to the list of circuits, which now numbered 51; 152 laborers were appointed; 38,145 members were reported, and the increase for the year was 2,533. The signatures to Wesley's plan for the union and perpetuation of the ministry were increased to eighty.

The collections for Kingswood, the chapel debts, and the Preacher's Fund, amounted to £958.

The prohibition of the erection of new chapels was now modified; they could be built wherever the Conference gave express permission, and authority for the purpose was given to Oldham, Taunton, and Halifax. To encourage the payment of church debts, the circuits were allowed to retain their Chapel Fund collections, except one fifth, which was to be returned, as usual, to the Conference. Classes exceeding thirty members were to be divided. At all the Conferences inquiry was made respecting the character and qualifications of each preacher, and his ministerial conduct, but at the present session Wesley made this examination with unusual particularity. He had received letters reporting unfavorably of the talents and piety of some of his laborers; he read them in the Conference, and requested a free but brotherly expression of opinion concerning any one against whom objections could be alleged. Committees were also appointed to examine two or three difficult cases. The result was, he records, that "we were all fully convinced that the charge advanced was without foundation; that God had really sent these laborers into his vineyard, and had qualified them for his work; and we were all more closely united together than we had been for many years."[12]

We have a single theological sentence in the Minutes of this session—an allusion to the Calvinistic controversy which was still rife: "We all deny that there is or can be *any merit*, properly speaking, *in man*."

Duncan M'Allum's name appears, for the first time, in the appointments of this Conference. His early education

[12] Journal, August 1, 1775.

had been neglected, but on coming under the influence of Methodism, not only his heart but his intellect seemed to be renewed. Quick in his perceptions, and of retentive memory and indefatigable industry, he became an able scholar in the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac languages, as also in most branches of mental and physical science. He was of great service to Methodism in Scotland, his native country, where he combined with his studious habits the incessant labors which were common to the Methodist ministry of the last century, preaching often four times on the Sabbath, twice in English and twice in Gaelic. It is recorded that "few have had more seals to their ministry in that country;" that perhaps no Wesleyan minister in Scotland was ever better known, more generally esteemed, or more useful; and that among his sincerest admirers were many of the clergy of the Scotch Church and professors of the Scotch universities.[13] He labored in the Methodist ranks far into our own century, having kept the field for nearly sixty years.[14]

John Valton[15] was one of M'Allum's fellow-candidates at the session of 1775, and a man of mark in the ministry for nearly twenty years. His character and usefulness, it is said, made him one of the finest examples of Christian life among the early Methodists.[16] He was born of Romish parents, and strictly trained in their faith. In his childhood he was sent to France, where an abbot had charge of his education, and, decorated with ecclesiastical vestments, he took part in the services of the altar. On returning to England he broke away from his papal errors, and by reading one of Hervey's works acquired

[13] Minutes of Wesleyan Conferences, vol. vii, p. 347.

[14] I regret that my data will not enable me to give his useful life a more adequate record. He died July 21, 1834, aged seventy-nine years. "I have no extraordinary triumph," he said, among his last remarks; "but all is peace." The reader should not confound him with his son Dr. Daniel M'Allum, who entered the itinerancy in 1817, and died seven years before his father.

[15] Wrongly spelled Walton in the Minutes of 1775.

[16] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i, book ii, chap. 4.

some knowledge of the Methodistic views of true religion; they deeply impressed him, but were banished from his mind during several years which he spent abroad in the army. While employed in a confidential military situation, at Runfleet, in Essex, the Methodist influence reached him again, and more directly, and he became a new man. He joined the Wesleyan society there, and was licensed as a local preacher. Wesley, as was his custom, urged him to give up his office and throw himself upon the "itinerant work," but he hesitated about six years. His health, meanwhile, declined, and he at last wrote to Wesley, "I do not know but that God has spoken the word, *Preach or die!*" He was induced the present year to enter the traveling ministry, and till the day of his death was a faithful laborer, eminently zealous and successful. Many of the old circuits still treasure precious reminiscences of him. He was a mighty evangelist — a "revivalist," spreading a powerful sensation in his course. He was the chief instrument of a memorable revival in John Nelson's Birstal circuit, and it is recorded that under one of his sermons in the West of England no less than a hundred persons were awakened. When he retired from his military life the government gave him an annual pension, and as he remained unmarried many years he never accepted any other aid than his food from his circuits, and gave his income, beyond his own economical wants, to the needy.[17] "His praise," said his brethren when they recorded his death, "is in all the Churches. He was a pattern of holiness, of charity, and of zeal. His ministry was plain, convincing, and powerful."[18]

On the 6th of August, 1776, the thirty-third Conference assembled in London: 12 candidates were received on probation, and 7 probationers admitted to membership;

[17] Life and Labors of the late Rev. John Valton, written by himself, and edited by Joseph Sutcliffe, A. M.

[18] He died "rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, in 1794." Wesleyan Minutes, vol. i, p. 283.

5 ceased to travel; there were 175 on the roll, including the Wesleys, but excluding, for the first time, those who were in America. The number of circuits was 55; there was an actual gain of five for the year, but the omission of America rendered the apparent increase but four.

The total membership was reported at 39,826, the American returns being stated at their number for the former year, as, owing to the war, no report had reached the Conference from this side of the Atlantic. The increase for the year was 1,681. The collections for the Conference funds amounted to more than £1,049.

Wesley again instituted a rigorous inquiry respecting the ability and characters of the preachers. The result was, that one was excluded for incapacity, "two for misbehavior, and we were," he writes, "thoroughly satisfied that all the rest had both grace and gifts for the work wherein they are engaged."

The preachers were recommended to study Fletcher's and Sellon's works on the Calvinistic controversy, and to preach zealously "universal redemption."

The thirty-fourth Conference met in Bristol August 5, 1777. There was an addition of 10 probationers, and of 4 members; 4 retired from the itineracy; 154 took appointments, exclusive of those who were in America; 3 new circuits were added, making the whole number 58. The aggregate membership was 38,274; an apparent loss of 1552, but a real gain of 1351, as the American returns were now omitted. The usual Chapel Fund collection was intermitted this year, in order that the societies might generally aid in the erection of City Road Chapel, London. The two contributions to Kingswood School and the Preachers' Fund amounted to £465.

In the Minutes of this session appear, for the first time, those obituary notices of preachers, which have ever since been an important part of such documents in all Methodist Conferences. They are recorded with Wesley's characteristic brevity. It was asked, "What preachers have died this

year?" and answered: "John Slocomb, at Clones, an old laborer, worn out in the service; John Harrison, near Lisburn, a promising youth, serious, modest, and much devoted to God; and William Minethorp, near Dunbar, an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile." Wesley seldom departed from this laconic style in his Conference obituaries, not even when recording the deaths of his most eminent co-laborers, as his brother and Fletcher.

He says in his Journal, that captious complaints were circulated respecting the condition of the Connection. It was affirmed that it had lost its spiritual life and simplicity. At the present Conference he particularly inquired of every Assistant, "Have you reason to believe, from your own observation, that the Methodists are a fallen people? Is there a decay or an increase in the work of God where you have been? Are the societies in general more dead or more alive to God than they were some years ago?" The almost universal answer was: "If we must *know them by their fruits*, there is no decay in the work of God among the people in general. The societies are not dead to God: they are as much alive as they have been for many years; and we look on this report as a mere device of Satan, to make our hands hang down."

One honest but weak-headed man, John Helton, who had been preaching for thirteen years, differed from his brethren on the question, and insisted upon leaving them as "a fallen people." His old associates endeavored to give him more charitable and hopeful views; but Wesley, better discerning his character, said, "Let him go in peace." He soon after found relief to his troubled mind by donning a broad-brimmed hat and joining the Quakers.

The Conference "concluded," says Wesley, "as it begun, in much love." It seems to have been pervaded by a special religious influence. John Pritchard, who had come over from hard trials in Ireland to attend it, records that he "experienced during the session much self-abasement, being conscious of his unworthiness" of a place among such men,

for "every one appeared as a bright light compared with himself." Fletcher was with them, and doubtless his presence contributed much to the spiritual interest of the occasion; for the radiance of heaven seemed to circle and glow about this rare man wherever he went. No one, except Wesley himself, was more revered, or possessed a more decided influence among the itinerants. His word, always bland, and fervent with piety, solved what seemed to be impracticable difficulties in their proceedings; they wept like children as he spoke; and when disputes ran high, as was sometimes though not often the case, he would throw himself upon his knees among them and call upon God for counsel, they bowing and sobbing around him. Any difficulty could thus be overcome with men of their sincerity and unselfishness.

We have seen Fletcher seeking health at Stoke Newington; he continued there fifteen weeks; but not improving, he was conducted by his friend Ireland to Bristol, where he had the present opportunity of meeting Wesley and his preachers. Benson, his fellow-sufferer in the troubles at Trevecca, says: "We have had an edifying Conference. Mr. Fletcher's visit to-day and yesterday has been attended with a blessing. His appearance, his exhortations, and his prayers, broke most of our hearts, and filled us with shame and self-abasement for our little improvement."[19] Fletcher happened to be passing by the door of a stable where Benson was alighting from his horse: "I shall never forget," writes the latter, "with what a heavenly air and sweet countenance he instantly came up to me in the stable, and, in the most solemn manner, putting his hands upon my head, as if he had been ordaining me for the sacred office of the ministry, prayed most fervently for and blessed me in the name of the Lord. To act in this way, indeed, toward his friends, was no uncommon thing with him; he was wont to do so frequently; and that in a manner so serious and devout, that it was almost impossible

[19] Treffry's Life of Benson, chap. 3.

not to be deeply affected with it."[20] Fletcher had prostrated his health by the prolonged Calvinistic controversy; he remained some months, after the adjournment of the Conference, under the hospitable roof of Ireland. He walked on the margin of the heavenly land, and its pure light and fragrant air seemed to flow out upon his pathway continually. We search in vain, through the records of saintly lives, for a human example of a more divine life, a more blessed walk with God in the pilgrimage of our suffering mortality, than he presented in these years of daily sickness. Spitting blood, and no longer able to preach, he ministered spiritual counsels to his friends and his parish in continual letters. It was about the time of this Conference that the affecting scene of the impromptu sacrament with Rogers and his fellow itinerants occurred. "This world," he writes to a friend, "has become to me a *world of love.*" To another he says: "Death has lost its sting, and I thank God I know not what hurry of spirit is, or unbelieving fears under my most terrifying symptoms." To a daughter of Perronet he writes: "The Lord does not suffer the enemy to disturb my peace. He gives me, in prospect, the victory over death." To Perronet himself, his old and dear friend, he says: "Let us abound, then, in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost; so shall we antedate the millennium, take the kingdom, and enjoy, beforehand, the rest which remains for the people of God. Your great age, and my great weakness, have brought us to the verge of eternity. O may we exult in the prospect, and look on that boundless sea through the glass of faith, and through the clefts of the Rock of ages, struck for us; through the vail of Christ's flesh, who, by dying for our sins and rising again for our justification, is become our resurrection and our life. I thank God I am a little stronger than when I came hither. I remember with grateful joy the happy days I spent at Shoreham: *Tecum vivere amem; tecum obeam lubens*; 'I could love to live with you; with you I would willingly

[20] Benson's Life of Fletcher, chap. 7.

die.' But what is better still, I shall live with the Lord and with you for ever and ever."

Accompanied by Ireland and his daughter, Fletcher retired to his native home at Nyon, Switzerland, where he remained nearly four years, seeking health amid its picturesque scenery, and exemplifying and occasionally preaching the Gospel to the children of his former neighbors. We shall meet him again in Wesley's Conferences, and find him still nearer heaven.

Before the next regular session, an informal one was held in Ireland in 1778. It appears to have been called for the purpose of allaying an excitement against the national Church, which had broken out among the Irish Methodists from their long maltreatment by the Establishment, and from the influence of Rev. Edward Smyth, who had been driven from it in the north of Ireland for his Methodistic preaching. He had joined the Methodist ministry, and with honest but indiscreet zeal labored to persuade Wesley and his Irish preachers to separate from the Establishment.[21] Wesley had long before settled this question, but he allowed it to be fully canvassed in the Irish Conference. "Is it not our duty," it was asked, "to separate from the Church, considering the wickedness both of the clergy and the people?" "We conceive not," was the answer; "1. Because both the priests and the people were full as wicked in the Jewish Church, and yet God never commanded the holy Israelites to separate from them. 2. Neither did our Lord command his disciples to separate from them; he rather commanded the contrary. 3. Hence it is clear *that* could not be the meaning of St. Paul's words: '*Come out from among them, and be ye separate.*'"

Wesley considered such questions as only a diversion from the appropriate work of Methodism, and he reminded the Conference of its high calling by the additional question, "Have we a right view of our work?" It was answered: "Perhaps not. It is not to take care of this or that society, or

[21] Myles's Chron. Hist. of the Methodists, chap. 4. London: 1803.

to preach so many times; but to save as many souls as we can; to bring as many sinners as we can to repentance, and with all our power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord."

The thirty-fifth regular session commenced on the 4th of August, 1778, at Leeds: 12 candidates were received on probation, and 12 probationers were admitted to membership; 5 ceased to travel; 2 had died during the year, and 2 were "set aside;" 164 received appointments. Sixty circuits were reported; the aggregate membership was 47,057, but this number comprised 6,968 in America, which now reappears in the statistics of the Minutes, though not among the "appointments."

The collections for the three Conference funds amounted to £1,088.

It was enjoined upon the preachers to visit all the prisoners they could. "By all means do this," says Wesley; "there cannot be a greater charity."

As Methodism was essentially missionary in its organization, no distinct scheme of missionary propagandism had yet been suggested in the Conferences; it had spread over the United Kingdom, to the West Indies, and to the North American colonies, spontaneously; but at the present session an extraordinary mission to Africa was discussed, and with much effect on the minds of the preachers, though the proposition was not yet to be attempted. "What was said on this occasion," writes Benson,[22] "and the prayers which followed, were manifestly attended with a great blessing, and the Lord was present of a truth." The spirit and reality of the missionary work existed among them, though not its form.

It is an interesting coincidence, that while the Conference was thus anticipating and prayerfully preparing itself for its later and unrivaled missionary achievements, there sat in its midst, for the first time, the marvelous man, small in person but gigantic in energy, who was to found, and repre-

[22] Macdonald's Memoir of Benson, p. 76.

sent for years, its great foreign enterprises, and to die sublimely at last as a sacrifice for them. Thomas Coke, LL.D., was born at Brecon, Wales, 1747, the only child of wealthy parents.[23] In his seventeenth year he became a Gentleman Commoner of Jesus College, Oxford. On entering upon his ministry as a clergyman of the Establish ment, his mind still wavered under the fashionable infidelity which then infected the University, and, to no small extent, the cultivated circles of English society. The writings of Sherlock had relieved his doubts, but had not led him to evangelical views of Christianity. He pursued the labors of his parish, at South Petherton, Somersetshire, in deep religious anxiety, and with so much earnestness as soon to excite the curiosity of his parishioners. His church became crowded, and as its vestry refused to furnish it with a gallery, he erected one at his own expense. Maxfield, Wesley's first lay preacher, had an interview with him, and led him to more spiritual views of religion. Visiting a family in Devonshire, he found among its laborers an untutored but intelligent Methodist, a class-leader of the rustics of the neighborhood. He sought this good man's conversation, and was surprised at his knowledge of divine truth. The nature of faith, justification, regeneration, and the evidences which attend them, the "unsearchable riches of Christ," were themes upon which the clergyman found he could be instructed by the unlettered peasant. They not only conversed but prayed together. The educated divine obtained from the lay Methodist his best knowledge on the profoundest subjects, and acknowledged that he owed to him greater obligations, "with respect to the means of finding peace with God and tranquillity of mind, than to any other person."

The alarming charge of Methodism was soon spread against him. He preached without notes, appointed evening meetings in various parts of the neighboring country, and while preaching at one of them received the peace of God

[23] Life of Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D., by Samuel Drew, ch. 1.

which the rustic class-leader had described to him, and his "heart was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory." He was now more zealous and more "irregular" than ever; he introduced the singing of hymns among his people, and preached Arminianism; for a brother clergyman had put Fletcher's Works into his hands, and with Coke, as with thousands of others, they refuted the doctrine of limited salvation. He was admonished by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, dismissed by his rector, and threatened by a mob among his parishioners. He was at last "chimed out of the church;" the next Sunday he preached in the street, near the church doors; on the following Sunday he again took his stand there, and was about to be assailed with stones, collected for the purpose; he escaped without harm only by the courageous kindness of a young gentleman and his sister, who stood close to him, and whom the rabble respected too much to injure. On the day that he left his parish, to cast in his lot with the Methodists, the bells were rung, and hogsheads of cider were brought out for the free use of the mob. Petherton celebrated as a jubilee its deliverance from a "Methodist curate," but it gave to the world a man who was to rank second only to Wesley in the success of Arminian Methodism, and to be the first Protestant bishop of the New World. In 1776 Wesley, while in Somersetshire, writes: "Here I found Dr. Coke, who came twenty miles on purpose to meet me. I had much conversation with him, and a union began then which I trust shall never end."[24] Wesley had looked, in his old age, to Fletcher as a successor in his great work; the vicar of Madeley, however, was too feeble in health, and too retiring in his habits, to accept the vast responsibility.[25] Coke seemed now raised up as a substitute. His appearance on the scene at this period cannot but strike us as one of those notable providences which characterize the early history of

[24] Journal, Works, vol. iv. See also Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii.

[25] See the correspondence of Wesley and Fletcher on the subject in Smith's Hist. of Meth. vol. i, book ii, chap. 5.

Methodism. Whitefield had stirred the conscience of England and America for it; Wesley had legislated it into organic vigor and durability; Charles Wesley had supplied it with a rich psalmody; Fletcher had just settled its theological system; but now that Wesley was growing old, he needed a coadjutor in its administration; the field had enlarged beyond his largest expectations; the time had come for great foreign plans; and the American Revolution was rendering necessary an American organization of Methodism. Coke was the providential man for these new wants. He became as indefatigable a traveler and preacher as Wesley himself; for some years he visited Ireland annually, and presided in its Conferences; he traversed England, Scotland, Wales, and America. He was especially the "foreign minister" of Methodism. He possessed a zealous and vivacious spirit, which nothing could damp, but which caught inspiration from discouragements, and, like the impeded flood, grew stronger by obstructions. He had marked defects, but was one of the most interesting characters in the history of the Methodistic movement—an example of ministerial zeal worthy of universal admiration and imitation. His stature was low, his voice feminine, but his soul was as vast as ever dwelt in a human frame. Though he became the first bishop of Methodism in the United States, he found not in a diocese coextensive with the new republic, room for his energies. Actuated by an impulse which allowed him no rest, he was perpetually contriving new measures for the extension of the cause which he had so providentially embraced. His plans, had he been a man of ordinary abilities, would have entitled him to the name of fanatic; but he was one of those rare spirits whose greatest conceptions and schemes are the legitimate products of their energies. He crossed the Atlantic eighteen times at his own expense. To the end of his life he had charge of the Methodist missions throughout the world. He founded the negro missions of the West Indies, which have exerted an important influence on the history of those islands. They included seventeen thousand

members at the time of his death. He visited his missions, spent almost the whole of his patrimonial fortune in their support, preached for them, and begged for them from door to door. The missionary spirit was with him "as a burning fire shut up in his bones," and during his life, it was not deemed necessary to organize a missionary society among the Wesleyans, for he embodied that great interest in his own person. When a veteran of almost seventy years, we shall see him presenting himself before the Wesleyan Conference as a missionary for the East Indies. The Conference objected on account of the expense, when, offering to pay the charges of the outfit himself, to the amount of thirty thousand dollars, he prevailed over all objections, and embarked with a small band of laborers. He died on the voyage, and was buried in the sea; but the undertaking succeeded, and the Wesleyan East India missions are the result. It has been justly asserted that, except Wesley, no man was ever connected with the Methodist body who contributed more to extend the blessings of Christianity among mankind. His colleague in the episcopacy of the American Church would not allow of even this exception; "a minister of Christ," said Asbury, when the news of his death arrived, "a minister of Christ, in zeal, in labors, and in services, the greatest man of the last century." Wesley used to say that Coke was a right hand to him. It was a noble sentiment recorded by him, at sea, on his first voyage to America, and illustrates his own character as fully as language can: "I want the wings of an eagle, and the voice of a trumpet, that I may proclaim the Gospel through the east and the west, the north and the south." There is genuine sublimity in the end of this flaming evangelist. Such a man belongs to no locality, he belongs to the world; though dead, without a grave, his influence has been widening daily over the earth, and it was fitting that he should be buried in the ocean, whose waves might sound his requiem on the shores of all lands. He will reappear often in the

course of our narrative, not without faults, but always admirable for his religious heroism and his incalculable usefulness.

He was appointed at this Conference to the London circuit, but soon began his general labors.[26]

On the 3d of August, 1779, the thirty-sixth Conference commenced in London: 11 candidates were received; 9 probationers were admitted into membership; 4 members located; 2 had died since the preceding session; 167 received appointments.[27] The circuits numbered 62; the aggregate membership was 42,486, exclusive of America; the increase was 2,397; the collections for the Conference funds, £948.

The Chapel Debt Fund was now detached from that of the Yearly Expense, or rather abolished, and it was recorded, "1. Let every circuit bear its own burden, and not lean upon the Conference. 2. Tell every one expressly, 'We do not make a subscription for paying debts.' 3. Let all the Assistants in Ireland do the same as those in England."

As Methodism still made little progress in Scotland, it was asked, "What can be done to revive the work in Scotland?" and answered: "1. Preach abroad as much as possible. 2. Try every town and village. 3. Visit every member of every family at home."

Henry Moore, afterward noted as a Methodist writer, and for many years a prominent preacher, was among the candidates admitted on probation at this session. He was born in Dublin, in 1751, and heard Wesley in that city in his childhood. On removing to London he often attended the preaching of Madan and Charles Wesley, and the religious impressions of his early life were renewed. On returning to Ireland he heard Smyth, who, though a nephew of an archbishop, had been expelled, as we have seen, from

[26] Moore (Life of Wesley, vol. ii, b. viii, chap, 1) differs from Drew in some details respecting Coke's Life; there is an apparent prejudice in some of the statements of the former. I have judged, as best I could, between them. Drew wrote from Coke's own data.

[27] Including both the Wesleys; they are included in all my estimates.

his curacy, on the charge of Methodism. "This," said Moore, "must be a good man, and I will go and hear him." He now became an habitual attendant at the Methodist Chapel, and after a prolonged struggle with his conscience could write: "The love of God was shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost given unto me, and I rejoiced in hope of the glory of God with joy unspeakable and full of glory."[28] Thenceforward he was a Methodist. His family were chagrined at his change of life; but he succeeded in introducing domestic worship among them. He visited the prisons, braving fever, and pestilence, and the still harder trial of agonizing sympathy with felons condemned to the gallows. He was induced to exhort, and at last to preach in a deserted weaver's shop, which was furnished for the purpose with seats and a desk; multitudes flocked to hear him, and when the circuit preacher visited the place he found a society organized with twenty-six members. Thus initiated into the Methodistic work, he sought still higher spiritual qualifications for it in fasting and prayer, in the meditation of Holy Scripture, and diligent studies. He records many special manifestations of God to him at this period of his history. "One day in particular," he writes, "in secret prayer, he so graciously visited me, that from that hour to the present, (and it is now more than fifty years,) notwithstanding unfaithfulness that will ever humble me before him, I never came under the power of unbelief. 'The things not seen,' of which the apostle says, 'faith is the evidence,' have been as constant and clear to my mind as the things which I see with my bodily eyes." Happy and rare experience!

Wesley's discerning eye could appreciate the promise of the young man, and in the spring of the present year he was ordered to take the field as an itinerant on the Londonderry circuit, to supply the place of a laborer who had died there. "I departed for my circuit," he says, "praising and blessing God." After a few years of faithful service in Ireland,

[28] Life of Rev. Henry Moore, by Mrs. Richard Smith. London: 1844.

during which he made rapid improvement in his studies, Wesley valued him so highly that he removed him to London, where he made him his confidential counselor. They met in the morning at five o'clock to answer letters; they traveled together extensively in the counties of Norfolk, Kent, and Oxford, and Moore was consulted on all important measures of the Connection. Wesley had so high an estimation of his talents and character that he endeavored to procure him ordination in the national Church, but failing, ordained him himself, assisted by two presbyters of the Establishment, Peard Dickinson and James Creighton.

Returning to Ireland, Moore did much for the establishment of Methodism in that country. He preached often in the open air, and shared the usual persecutions of his ministerial brethren. On one occasion he took his stand upon a chair, in Lower Abbey-street, Dublin, and began to sing a hymn. An immense multitude came running from all directions. For some time they were quiet, staring with inquisitive curiosity at the scene. He perceived that they were mostly papists, as they bowed and courtesied at the name of Jesus in the hymn. During his prayer many knelt on the stones, but at its conclusion a woman cried out, "Where is the Hail Mary?" Its omission began to open their eyes. He announced his text, and was proceeding with his discourse, when another papist interrupted him with exclamations of surprise and remonstrance. The vast assembly now became divided, a part contending for the preacher, a part for popery, and a genuine Irish riot ensued. Several of the most boisterous of the mob endeavored to reach him in order to pull him down; others fought back the assailants. Moore's wife and a young female friend who stood near him held fast the chair; their courage alone saved him, for an Irish mob is usually as gallant as clamorous; and "such," writes Moore; "is the Irish feeling respecting females, that if the nearest ruffian had interfered with the two defenseless women, he would soon have had the whole assembly upon him." The rioters were determined, how-

even, to enjoy themselves in their own way. Clods and rotten eggs flew in all directions. Moore saw, he says, "a blessed young man" who stood close to him, listening with his eyes shut, struck by an egg which sadly besmeared him; but he wiped his face, and took no further notice of it. He at length concluded with an appeal to his congregation, which seemed to have some effect, so that he retired home unmolested. A drunken sailor immediately stepped on the chair, and commenced singing a song. The multitude shouted; and when the song was concluded, the tar began to preach in his way. "Alas!" says Moore, "I had soon to lament over him! When he had amused himself and his auditors for a considerable time, he attempted to pass from the quay to his ship, but slipping from the plank, notwithstanding all the exertions made to save him, he found a watery grave!"

The preacher was not to be conquered; he maintained faithfully the contested post, and one of the principal Methodist chapels in Dublin now stands on the street, a monument of his successful labors and sufferings.

Moore was appointed by Wesley one of the trustees of his manuscripts and books; he became his biographer;[29] he lived to be the last survivor of the men whom Wesley had ordained; his pen and his preaching promoted Methodism through nearly seventy years, and he died in his ninety-third year, its most venerable patriarch.

The thirty-seventh Conference assembled at Bristol, August 1, 1780. It was resolved that in future nine or ten days should be allowed for each session, that its business might be more thoroughly considered. The "Large Minutes," containing the whole discipline of the body, were revised and solemnly confirmed. A personal difficulty had occurred between Benson and Coke, now two of the most important members of the conference. The latter had hastily suspected the former of heretical views on the character of Christ. A correspondence between them had not proved satisfactory to either, and the subject was brought before the session.

[29] We owe to him also the Memoir of Mary Fletcher.

Wesley's sagacity immediately perceived what disastrous consequences might ensue from the agitation of such a question, mixed up with personal feelings, among his preachers. He therefore refused to have it discussed, but referred it to a committee, which exonerated Benson from the charge of the earnest and impulsive doctor. The latter showed his characteristic amiability by offering to ask formally the forgiveness of Benson, before the whole Conference. They cordially shook hands in presence of their brethren, and thus wisely and charitably ended a dispute which, if drawn out into a polemical debate, might have made havoc among the ministry and societies.[30] Their generous conduct is worthy of commemoration as an example for their successors through all time—the wisest possible solution of such difficulties. If Benson had not the clearest views on the question, he was not provoked into obstinate error by opposition, and his subsequent writings showed thorough orthodoxy.

At this session 11 candidates were admitted on probation; 4 were received into membership; 5 ceased to travel; 2 had died since the last Conference; 171 received appointments; 64 circuits were reported; the aggregate membership was 43,830; the increase 1,344; the returns for the Conference funds amounted to £1,118.

During the present decade the membership of the societies had increased 14,651.[31] The itinerant ministry, exclusive of preachers in America, had gained fifty-two laborers notwithstanding the large annual recessions to the ranks of the local preachers. The number of circuits had advanced from fifty to sixty-four.

The aggregate British and American membership, exclusive of the West Indies, was 52,334; the aggregate itinerant ministry 213, besides many hundreds of local preachers;[32] and in every county and most towns in England, were

[30] Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1822, p. 74, compared with Macdonald's Life of Benson, p. 106.

[31] The number for 1770 was erroneously given (from the Minutes) at 29,466 in vol. i, book iv, chap. 6. It should have been 29,179.

[32] Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, book iii, chap. 1.

societies and chapels. Notwithstanding the agitation of the Calvinistic controversy, Methodism had steadily and vigorously advanced. Some of the mightiest men of its ministry entered its field during this period, and Wesley, hoary with seventy-seven years, still led them on with unyielding health and energy. The growth and stability of his cause led him to indulge prophetic hopes of its continued success, which fourscore subsequent years have not defeated. "How vast," he exclaims, "is the increase of the work of God, particularly in the most rugged and uncultivated places! How does he send the springs of grace into the valleys that run among the hills!"[33] Toward the close of the present decade he wrote to a friend: "The remark of Luther, 'that a revival of religion seldom continues above thirty years,' has been verified many times in several countries. But it will not always hold. The present revival of religion in England has already continued fifty years. And, blessed be God! it is at least as likely to continue as it was twenty or thirty years ago. Indeed, it is far more likely; as it not only spreads wider, but sinks deeper than ever; more and more persons being able to testify that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. We have therefore reason to hope that *this revival of religion will continue, and continually increase, till the time when all Israel shall be saved, and the fullness of the Gentiles shall come.*"[34]

The hope is more probable to-day than it was when Wesley uttered it, eighty years ago.

[33] Journal, May 1, 1780. [34] Letter 717, Works, vol. vii, p. 180.

CHAPTER VI.

LABORS OF WESLEY FROM 1780 TO 1785.

Wesley's happy Old Age — Affecting Reminiscences — Wesley and little Children — Dr. Johnson — Disturbances in the Societies — Grand climacteric Year of Methodism — Wesley's Deed of Declaration — Its Provisions and Character — His Ordination of Coke — Condition of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America — Condition of Methodism — Wesley solicits the Bishop of London to ordain a Preacher for them — Fletcher's Interest for America — The Episcopal Organization of American Methodism — It precedes that of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

During the first half of the decade from 1780 to 1790, Wesley presented scarcely a single evidence of advanced age except his gray hairs. He notices his birthday, from year to year, with increasing interest, and with grateful wonder at his continued vigor. He says, June 28, 1780, after preaching in the public square at Sheffield: "I can hardly think I have entered this day into the seventy-eighth year of my age. By the blessing of God I am just the same as when I entered the twenty-eighth. This hath God wrought, chiefly by my constant exercise, my rising early, and preaching morning and evening."[35] At his next birthday a similar record is made. He enters his eightieth year exclaiming, "Blessed be God! my time is not 'labor and sorrow.'" He knows no more pain or bodily infirmities than at five-and-twenty. This he still imputes, 1. To the providence of God, fitting him for his peculiar work. 2. To his still traveling four or five thousand miles a year. 3. To his command of sleep, night or day, whenever he needs it.

[35] The citations from Wesley in this chapter are from his Journals, 1780–1790, (Works, vol. iv,) except when otherwise indicated.

4. To his rising at a set hour. And, 5. To his constant preaching, particularly in the morning.

On the next anniversary he is still surprised that his eye waxes not dim; that the strength, mental and physical, of his thirtieth year is unimpaired. In 1784 the marvelous story is repeated. "To-day I entered on my eighty-second year, and found myself just as strong to labor, and as fit for any exercise of body or mind, as I was forty years ago. I do not impute this to second causes, but to the Sovereign Lord of all. It is he who bids the sun of life stand still so long as it pleaseth him." He is as strong at eighty-one as he was at twenty-one; and abundantly more healthy, being a stranger to the head-ache, tooth-ache, and other bodily disorders which attended his youth.

In 1785 he writes: "By the good providence of God, I finished the eighty-second year of my age. Is any thing too hard for God? It is now eleven years since I have felt any such thing as weariness: many times I speak till my voice fails, and I can speak no longer: frequently I walk till my strength fails, and I can walk no further; yet even then I feel no sensation of weariness; but am perfectly easy from head to foot. I dare not impute this to natural causes: it is the will of God."

His associates could not perceive in him any signs of intellectual decay, nor can the critic detect any in his writings. Without the usual return of the mental weakness of childhood, there is apparent some return of its pure and simple freshness and vivacity. Increased sunshine seems to illuminate his daily life; he records beautiful impressions of nature and books more frequently; he compares and critises Ariosto and Tasso; he indulges occasionally in dramatic reading and criticism; he discusses with zest the question of Ossian's poetry, then rife in literary circles; he notes, in brief but picturesque passages, the scenery of his out-door preaching and the landscapes of his travels, and visits oftener, and describes more fully than ever, the gardens of the nobility. "Elegant" buildings, (a phrase often

applied by him with pleasure to new Methodist chapels,) and fine music, and grand old ruins, excite his admiration; gazing on the "once magnificent cathedral" of Inverness, "what barbarians," he says, "must they have been who hastened the destruction of this beautiful pile by taking the lead off the roof." He is no Puritan iconoclast. He is refreshed by the bursting forth of the spring in the north, and the return of the singing birds. "How gladly would I repose awhile here," he writes of a locality with a pleasant garden and shady walk around the neighboring meadows; "but repose is not for me in this world." He makes two voyages to Holland during this decade; preaches in the English and Independent Churches at the Hague, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam; is received with veneration into the best of religious families, native and English; "expounds" in their circles, delights in their piety, and writes with the interest of youth respecting the scenery, gardens, and public edifices. If a sense of sadness comes over him sometimes, when local reminiscences recall the distant past, it is more poetic than painful. He frequently passes through Epworth, his birth-place, "which he yet loved beyond most places in the world;" he is still denied its parish pulpit, for its vicar is a godless man; his own society, however, flourishes; his chapel cannot contain his congregation, and he addresses larger assemblies than ever he had seen there; he walks pensively through the churchyard, where he had preached to a former generation on the tomb of his father; "I felt," he says, "the truth, 'one generation goeth and another cometh;' see how the earth drops its inhabitants as the tree drops its leaves." In 1784 he preached at Kingswood under the shade of a double row of trees, which, he writes, "I planted about forty years ago. How little did any one then think that they would answer such an intention! The sun shone as hot as it used to do even in Georgia, but his rays could not pierce our canopy, and our Lord, meantime, shone upon many souls, and refreshed them that were weary." But his

old colliers were now nearly all sleeping in their neighboring graves; a few only lingered, bent with toil and years, amid the vast throngs that still gathered about him, wondering with tearful eyes at the "old man forever young." He records, with mingled sadness and joy, frequent visits to dying saints, the friends of his early life; he takes leave of them as a traveler going on a journey, but soon to meet them again. His congregations continually remind him that he has passed into another age. In an immense assembly at Garth Heads "there were few that remembered his first sermon there." At Cardiff he records the names of the chief Methodists who had first gathered around him in that town; but now they "and a long train were gone hence and were to be seen no more." At Brinsley he met the society privately, and found but one or two of the original members, "most of them having gone to Abraham's bosom." At St. Just he rejoiced to find some of his oldest brethren still surviving, "although many had gone;" but the same day nature reminded him of the change of all things; for clambering down the rocks to the edge of the water, he observed that the sea had "gained some hundred yards" since his first visit. At St. Ives he found that good "old John Nance," whose house had been attacked by the mob which tore down the chapel in the early days of fiery trial, had gone; but he had gone well; "sitting behind the preacher in the pulpit, he sunk down, was carried out, and fell asleep." He is permitted to stand again in the pulpit of St. Giles, in London, where, more than fifty years since, he had preached before going to America. "Are they not passed as a watch in the night," he writes. After the extraordinary changes of his history, we are not surprised when he adds that "a solemn awe sat on the whole congregation." At Wednesbury, "the mother society of Staffordshire," he found, in his eighty-fifth year, but a few of the "old standers left," only three out of three hundred and fifteen; "a new generation had sprung up;" but what tales of hard-fought battles and well won victories could these three tell,

respecting the days when Wednesbury and most of Staf fordshire were, for months, agitated by mobs and tumults hardly short of civil war;[36] when the multitudinous persecu tors were called together by sound of horn, kept their flag flying for days in the market-place of Walsal, marched in detachments from village to village, knocking down the Methodists in the streets, scattering their families, abusing their women "in a manner," says Wesley, "too horrible to be related;" dilapidating their houses, so that Charles Wesley could afterward distinguish them as he rode through Darlaston by "their marks of violence;" and holding vir tual possession of a large part of the region for nearly half a year.

He calls on his old friend and first lay-preacher, Maxwell; finds him sinking under years and paralysis, and, kneeling down, invokes blessings upon his last days, and preaches for him in his chapel. Romaine still lingers, and meets him during "an agreeable hour" in the house of Ireland, near Bristol. Many an old reminiscence was doubtless recalled in that hour. He pauses often at Shoreham, to pray with Perronet, the chief of his first friends and counselors, now bending under ninety years and more, but rejoicing at the open gate of heaven, and soon to enter it. In Lincolnshire he meets Delamotte, who accompanied him to Georgia, and lodges with him a night; "he seems," says Wesley, "to be just the same as when we lodged together five and forty years ago, only he complained of the infirmities of age, which, through the mercy of God, I know nothing of." He spends two hours with his old friend, "that great man," Dr. Johnson; but he is also now "sinking into the grave." The great moralist delighted in Wesley's conversation, and was impatient only of his economy of time. "He talks well on any subject," said Johnson; "I could converse with him all night."[37]

[36] See vol. i, book ii, chap. 5 and 6.

[37] See Whitehead's Life of Wesley, book iii, chap. 6. Johnson dis cerned and esteemed Wesley's real character, though less candid toward

Old families which used to entertain him drop away one after another; "their houses know neither them nor him any more." His letters are more numerous than ever; his female correspondence was always extensive, and marked by the delicacy yet fervid sentiment which usually characterize the regard for woman entertained by superior minds—such minds, at least, as are great in character as well as in faculty. A pensive eagerness now distinguishes it; for, how many tender flowers, which had bloomed by his nurture, had faded and perished along his path! To one he writes: "I sometimes fear lest you also, as those I tenderly love generally have been, should be snatched away. But let us live to-day." "I had hopes," he again writes, "of seeing a friend at Lewisham, in my way, and so I did; but it was in her coffin. It is well, since she finished her course with joy. In due time I shall see her in glory."[38]

Such changes, and the other saddening associations of extreme age, could not diminish the glow and animation of his healthful temperament. He is described as still

Whitefield; the latter, "he believed sincerely, meant well," says Boswell, (Life of Johnson, Anno 1773;) "but he had a mixture of politics and ostentation, whereas Wesley thought of religion only." Toplady satirized Wesley as "the old Fox tarred and feathered," for the use he made of Johnson's pamphlet, "Taxation no Tyranny." Johnson, however, not only approved Wesley's use of it, but felt honored by it. He wrote Wesley, in return, one of his finest compliments. "I have thanks likewise to return you for the addition of your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a mind as yours may justly confirm me in my own opinion. What effect my paper has upon the public, I know not; but I have no reason to be discouraged. The lecturer was surely in the right who, though he saw his audience slinking away, refused to quit the chair while Plato stayed." Gentleman's Magazine, 1797, p. 455, and Boswell's Johnson, Anno 1776.

[38] "It continually appears, from Mr. Wesley's mode of writing, that his female disciples consulted him as one to whom they ascribed the *spirit* as well as the *wisdom* of an apostle. The subjects treated of establish this fact, and present, as it were, the reflected image of as unqualified a confidence as could be placed in a human being. We have, then, virtually, in those letters the great body of Mr. Wesley's female friends bearing to his character the most unimpeachable as well as the most concordant witness." Letter of Alexander Knox to Robert Southey, Southey's Wesley, App.

cheerful, fascinating, even, in his conversation, the delight of the Christian households which entertained him in his rapid movements. "No cynical remarks on the levity of youth embittered his discourse." Children, wondering at the tales they heard from their fathers of his early struggles, and at the marvels of his old age, flocked about him with fondness, not only at their homes but in the public assemblies. They reverenced, but could never fear the bland old man. As the instincts can less readily be deceived than the under standing, a man whose heart can love childhood can never be unloved by children, for he can never be basely bad; and children instinctively perceive whom they can trust. Wesley had peculiar tenderness for them. When ascending the pulpit of the church at Raithby, in which he was often allowed to preach, a child sat in his way on the stairs; instead of ordering it down, he took it up in his arms, kissed it, and, passing, placed it tenderly on the same spot.[39] On entering Oldham he found the "whole street lined with children;" they ran around him and before him on his way to the spot on which he was to preach, and after the sermon "a whole troop, boys and girls, closed him in, and would not let him go till he had shaken each of them by the hand." At Yeadon he speaks of "an army of little children," full as numerous and almost as loving as those which surrounded him at Oldham. At Bolton "such an army of them" got about him when he came out of the chapel, that he could scarce disengage himself from them. At Stockton-upon-Tees, as soon as he came down from the desk, he was enclosed by a body of them; one after another sunk down upon their knees, until they were all kneeling: he kneeled down himself, and commenced praying for them. Multitudes of people ran back into the house. "The fire," he says, "kindled and ran from heart to heart, till few, if any, were unaffected. Is not this a new thing in the earth? God

[39] Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1840. An ignorant papist, as we shall hereafter see, was, by a similar example, won to Methodism, and became one of its most useful preachers.

begins his work in children. Thus it has been in Cornwall, Manchester, and Epworth." At another time he speaks of a little girl who had sat up all night, and then walked two miles to see him. He took her into his carriage, and was surprised and delighted with her simple conversation during the rest of his ride.

Wesley is described as still fresh in color, with a brilliant eye and vivacious spirits. Henry Moore, who was habitually with him in these later years, says that few saw him without being struck with his appearance, and many who had been greatly prejudiced against him were known to change their opinion the moment they were introduced into his presence; that in his countenance and demeanor there was a cheerfulness mingled with gravity, and a sprightliness, which was the natural result of an unusual flow of spirits, and yet was accompanied by every mark of the most serene tranquillity; that his aspect, particularly in profile, had a strong character of acuteness and penetration; that in dress he was a pattern of neatness and simplicity; a narrow plaited stock, a coat with a small upright collar, no buckles at the knees, no silk or velvet in any part of his apparel, and a head as white as snow, suggested an idea of something primitive and apostolic; while an air of neatness was diffused over his whole person.[40]

"So fine an old man," says another who often saw him, "I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance; every look showed how fully he enjoyed 'the gay remembrance of a life well spent.' Wherever he went he diffused a portion of his own felicity. . . . While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless; and both saw in his uninterrupted cheer-

[40] Moore's Life of Wesley, book viii, chap. 5. He was small in stature. In his Journal, Nov. 19, 1783, he says: "When I was at Sevenoaks I made an odd remark. In the year 1769, I weighed a hundred and twenty-two pounds. In 1783, I weighed not a pound more or less. I doubt whether such another instance is to be found in Great Britain."

fulness the excellence of true religion. . . . In him even old age appeared delightful—like an evening without a cloud —and it was impossible to observe him without wishing fervently, 'May my latter end be like his!'"[41]

Among other reasons given by Wesley for his health and long life was his exemption from anxiety. It was probably as much an effect as a cause of his constitutional vigor. Occasions of anxiety he certainly had; few men of his day could have had more; and they multiplied as his years advanced. The fate of the great cause he had founded must now have become an habitual question to him. He had also almost habitual necessity to defend it against the discontents of preachers and people. Let it not be supposed, as we trace him through prosperous societies and jubilant welcomes, that he met no such annoyances, no decayed "appointments," or wrangling "classes;" they were continually occurring. At the beginning of this decade the utmost endeavors of himself and his brother were necessary to control a revolt from his authority at Bath, where one of his preachers, Alexander M'Nab, refused to recognize another whom he had sent, and produced a popular disaffection, which for some time proved disastrous to the prosperity of the society, and extended even to the societies at Bristol. The Birstal Methodists, now that John Nelson was no more, were also agitated by a prolonged controversy between their trustees and Wesley concerning his power, and that of the Conference after him, to appoint their pastor. A similar trouble broke out at Dewsbury, and John Atlay, after serving as an itinerant about nine years, and as Wesley's book-steward, in London some fifteen years more, deserted him, to take charge of the alienated society.

The abstract right of these people to choose their own pastors could not be denied, but they had also the right to waive that abstract right, and they had virtually done so, by entering into communion with the Methodist Connection, on its recognized terms; to revolt from it now was

[41] Alexander Knox, Esq., Watson's Wesley, p. 301.

to set an example which, if generally followed, would break up the Connection, reduce it to congregationalism, and overthrow that system of itinerancy which was one of the chief conditions of its ministerial efficiency, and to the loss of which, through the control of pulpits by local bodies of trustees, the decline of Calvinistic Methodism has been ascribed, as we have noticed. Wesley therefore maintained rigidly this peculiarity of his cause.[42]

Other measures, which could not fail to provoke excitement and hostility, had now also become necessary for the security of Methodism. The year 1784 has been called its grand climacteric year,[43] as that in which Wesley gave to his Conference a legal settlement, by his noted Deed of Declaration, and to American Methodism an episcopal organization, by ordaining for it, with his own hands, a bishop and two presbyters.

Hitherto the deeds of chapels and preachers' houses, or parsonages, had conveyed them to trustees for the use of such preachers as John or Charles Wesley should send to them, and after the death of the Wesleys, of such as the Conference should appoint. Wesley, at the instance of Coke, ascertained, by consultation with legal authorities, that the law would not recognize the Conference unless that body were more precisely defined, and that it could not claim control over its pulpits. Wesley reported this opinion to the Conference, and it requested him to draw up a definition of its character and powers at his discretion. The Conference had not been an incorporated institution; it had met at Wesley's call for consultation with him respecting the interests of the Connection; his power in it had been supreme; and preachers who attended its sessions came at his express invitation.[44] He now named, in his Deed of

[42] See Wesley's allusions to the case of M'Nab, Journal, 1779, 1780, Works, vol. iv; also "The case of Birstal House," and "The Case of Dewsbury House;" "Four Letters to Mr. John Atlay," and "A Word to whom it may Concern," Works, vol. vii.

[43] Southey's Life of Wesley, chap. 29.

[44] Works, vol. vii, p. 309.

Declaration, one hundred of them to be the legal Conference after his death, a number larger than had usually attended its sessions, and which he deemed sufficient to secure the safety of a "multitude of counselors;" as many as could be wisely withdrawn annually for a week or more from the appointments, or economically convened for business. They were to meet annually at London, Bristol, Leeds, or any such place as they should choose; they were to fill all vacancies in their own body; their sessions were not to last over three weeks, or less than five days; forty members must be present in order to the validity of any act or vote, unless the whole body should, by death or other cause, be reduced to less than that number. They could elect no one to membership who had not been a year in "full connection" as a preacher. They must appoint a president and secretary; the former was to have the right of a double vote, and such other privileges as the Conference might grant him. An absentee, without leave, from two successive annual sessions forfeited his membership, unless he appeared on the first day of the third session, or was voted exemption by the body. The Conference thus constituted had the right to admit preachers on probation, to receive probationers into membership, and to expel offenders for sufficient reason. They could not appoint, to any of the chapels, any preacher who was not a member of the Methodist Connection, and no appointment could be made for a longer term than three years, except in the cases of ordained clergymen of the Church of England. They had power to commission members of their body to represent them in Ireland or in any other part of the world, the official acts of such representatives being recognized as acts of the Conference. If it should be reduced below forty members, and continue so for three years, or should it neglect to meet for three years, it was thereby dissolved, and the chapels and preachers' houses thenceforward belonged to their respective trustees in trust, for the occupancy of such pastors as the trustees should appoint. The life estate of John and Charles Wesley in the houses and

chapels of the Connection was not to be affected by this deed. Subsequently, by a wise accommodation, all the preachers who were in connection with the Conference were permitted to vote, and such as had been members a given number of years were allowed to put the President in nomination, by their votes, for the confirmation of the Legal Hundred.[45]

The necessity of such a constitution, in the event of Wesley's death, was obvious and absolute. The peculiar economy of Methodism could not otherwise proceed. It must cease to be itinerant, must subside into congregationalism, or else adopt some such organization as this. The Deed was sagaciously framed, and time has well proved its wisdom.[46] It was also as liberal toward the preachers as it could safely be; much more so than had hitherto been the personal authority of Wesley, or than the episcopal economy adopted about the same time by his American preachers. It vested all his own power in a hundred members of the ministry; the number was certainly sufficient, and most probably too large for its practical purposes; but, as there were now one hundred and ninety-one, some felt offended by their omission, and during the remainder of his life he was to suffer not a few perplexities from their discontent.[47] It was

[45] Watson's Works, vol. v, pp. 258, 259; Crowther's Portraiture, p. 43. Coke recommended these concessions.

[46] "The consequence has been, that the ministers have generally remained most firmly united by affection and mutual confidence, and that few serious disputes have ever arisen among them, or have extended beyond a very few individuals. Ecclesiastical history does not, perhaps, present an instance of an equal number of ministers brought into contact so close, and called so frequently together, for the discussion of various subjects, among whom so much general unanimity, both as to doctrine and points of discipline, has prevailed, joined with so much real goodwill and friendship toward each other for so great a number of years." Watson's Wesley, chap. 12.

[47] John Hampson, Sen., one of his preachers, immediately issued against it "An Appeal to the Rev. John and Charles Wesley; to all the Preachers who act in connection with them, and to every Member of their respective Societies in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America!" Hampson had been one of the most urgent advisers of Wesley in favor of some such legal provision; but the omission of his name from the one hundred reversed his logic entirely.

but an expansion of the plan for the perpetuation of the Connection which he had presented to the Conference in 1769, which had been signed at subsequent sessions by most of the preachers, and which proposed to vest at his death, in a "committee," power to do whatever he then did, and was "universally approved."[48] The Deed was enrolled in the High Court of Chancery, and has ever since been a firm anchorage to Wesleyan Methodism. Wesley himself deemed it "a foundation likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure."[49]

Dr. Coke was blamed severely as responsible for the limitation of the names in the Deed. He issued an "Address to the Methodist Societies in Great Britain and Ireland on the Settlement of the Preaching Houses," in which he fully vindicated himself. The credit of first suggesting the Deed seems in fact to be due to him.[50] He strangely combined the comprehensiveness and prescience of a statesmanlike mind with the weaknesses of an impulsive heart. His agency in the organic settlement of English Methodism by the Deed of Declaration, is one of his greatest historical honors; but he expressly declares that he was "not concerned in the limitation of the number or the selection of

[48] Hampson's Appeal. See this plan in vol. i, book iv. chap. 6. For the Deed of Declaration, see Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii, book viii, chap. 1. Consult also Moore for a correction of the extraordinary misrepresentations of Whitehead's Life of Wesley. Moore says: "I can state with the fullest certainty, that what Dr. Whitehead has asserted, respecting Mr. Wesley having repented of this transaction, is totally unfounded. On the contrary, he reviewed it always with high satisfaction; and praised God, who had brought him through a business which he had long contemplated with earnest desire, and yet with many fears. The issue, even to this day, proves the wisdom of the measure; and that it was in the order of HIM, without whom 'nothing is strong, nothing is holy.' Many chapels have been restored to the societies to whom they, in justice, belonged, by the upright decision of our Courts of Equity, so that now no fears are entertained of any chapels settled according to this Deed." Whitehead's Life of Wesley should not be consulted by any whose acquaintance with other contemporary authorities is not thorough enough to enable them to correct that author's immoderate prejudices.

[49] Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, p. 356.

[50] See his Address in Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 3.

the one hundred preachers." Wesley himself says that in naming these preachers, as he had *no advisers*, so he had no respect to persons, but simply set down those which, according to the best of his judgment, were most proper.[51]

In this most momentous measure Wesley followed, as was usual with him, the indications of Providence. The time had arrived for it; he was beyond eighty years of age; his decease was a daily liability; his cause had grown to an extent, and assumed an importance, which demanded legal definitions and guarantees to secure it from general confusion, if not from wreck, at his death; and the results of the plan which he adopted have demonstrated his prudent foresight.

It is another of the great providential facts of his history, that the same year which thus gave a constitutional security to Methodism in Great Britain, was signalized by its episcopal organization in America; a measure which, by its consequences, may well be ranked among the most important events of Wesley's important life. Here again did he follow, with simple wisdom, the guidance of that Divine Providence, the recognition of which, in the affairs of men, and especially in the affairs of the Church, was the crowning maxim of his philosophy and the crowning fact of his policy. He had been providentially preparing for this new and momentous exigency by that gradual development of his personal opinions which we have already traced. Bigoted even, as a High Churchman, at the beginning of his career, we have seen him, year after year, reaching more liberal views of ecclesiastical policy. Nearly forty years before his ordinations for America, he had, after reading Lord King's "Primitive Church," renounced the opinion that a distinction of order, rather than of office, existed between bishops and presbyters.[52] Fifteen years later he denied the necessity,

[51] Life by Coke and Moore, p. 356.

[52] Vol. i, book iii, chap. 5. The persistent misrepresentations of him on this point are astonishing. The Rev. Edwin Sidney (Life of Walker, of Truro, p. 260) says that "when he wanted ordained preachers for America he, of a sudden, *in his old age*, found out, by reading Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church, that bishops and presbyters are of the same

though not the expediency, of episcopal ordination. Bishop Stillingfleet had convinced him that it was "an entire mistake, that none but episcopal ordination was valid."[53] Henceforth he held that presbyters and bishops, identical in order, differing only in office, had essentially the same right of ordination. It was not possible for a man like Wesley, keen, quick, fearless, and candid, to remain long in any ecclesi astical prejudice, now that he was on this track of progress ive opinions. He soon broke away from all other regard for questions of Church government than that of Scriptural expediency. And as early as 1756, when in his maturest intellectual vigor, he declares: "As to my own judgment, I still believe 'the episcopal form of Church government to be Scriptural and apostolical;' I mean, well agreeing with the practice and writings of the apostles; but that it is prescribed in Scripture, I do not believe. 'This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I have been heartily ashamed of ever since I read Bishop Stillingfleet's 'Irenicum.' I think he has unanswerably proved that 'neither Christ nor his apostles prescribe any particular form of Church govern ment, and that the plea of divine right for diocesan episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive Church.'"[54]

It was then by no new assumption in his old age, in his imbecility, as some of his critics allege, that he now met the necessities of American Methodism, by ordaining men to provide for them. His keenest-eyed associates could as yet detect no declension of his faculties; and if they could, still his course in this case was in accordance with the reasonings of his best days, and he but repeats his long-established opinions when he now asserts: "I firmly believe I am a Scriptural *episcopos* as much as any man in England, for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove."[55]

order." This inexcusable violation of historical truth is common in the writings of Churchmen against Methodism.

[53] A Letter to a Friend, Works, vol. vii, p. 301.

[54] Letter to Rev. Mr. Clark, Works, vol. vii, p. 284.

[55] "On the Church," Works, vol. vii, p. 312.

Methodism had spread rapidly in America, notwithstanding the war of the Revolution. It now comprised eighty-three traveling preachers, besides some hundreds of local preachers, and about fifteen thousand members and many thousands of hearers, and its ecclesiastical plans were extending a net-work of powerful agencies over the country. The Revolution had not only dissolved the civil, but also the ecclesiastical relations of the colonies to England. Many of the English clergy, on whom the Methodist societies had depended for the sacraments, had fled from the land, or had entered political or military life, and the Episcopal Church had been generally disabled. In Virginia, the center of its colonial strength, it had rapidly declined, morally as well as numerically. At the Declaration of Independence it included not more than one third of the population of that province.[56] At the beginning of the war the sixty-one counties of Virginia contained ninety-five parishes, one hundred and sixty-four churches, and ninety-one clergymen. At the conclusion of the contest many of her churches were in ruins, nearly a fourth of her parishes "extinct or forsaken," and thirty-four of the remaining seventy-two were without pastoral supplies; twenty-eight only of her ninety-one clergymen remained, and these with an addition, soon after the war, of eight from other parts of the country, ministered in but thirty-six parishes.[57] In the year in which Wesley ordained an American Methodist bishop, "memorials" to the Virginia legislature for the incorporation of the "Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia," and for other advantages to religion, were met by counter petitions that "no step might be taken in aid of religion, but that it might be left to its own superior and successful influence."[58] The memorials were postponed till the

[56] Burk's History of Virginia, vol. ii, p. 180. Hawks (Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States of America, vol. i, ch. 9,) doubts Burk's estimate. Dr. Hawks's volume needs important emendations, especially in respect to Methodism.

[57] Hawks, Contributions, vol. i, chap. x.

[58] Journals of the Virginia Assembly, 1784.

next session, and then rejected; but a bill for the "incorporation of all religious societies which may apply for the same," was adopted. In other parts of the country the English Church never had been numerically strong, and its existence was now precarious, except in two or three large cities.

Under these circumstances the Methodists demanded of their preachers the administration of the sacraments. Many of the societies had been months, some of them years, without them. The demand was not only urgent, it was logically right; but by the majority of the preachers it was not deemed expedient. The prudent delay which Wesley, notwithstanding his liberal ecclesiastical principles, had practised in England, afforded a lesson which their good sense could not disregard. They exhorted their people, therefore, to wait patiently till he could be consulted. Thomas Rankin, one of Wesley's missionaries, presiding at the Conference of Deer Creek, Maryland, 1777, induced them to delay one year. At the next session the subject was again prudently postponed, as no English preacher was present, Rankin having returned to England, and Asbury being absent and sick. In 1779 the question occasioned a virtual schism, the preachers of the South being resolute for the administration of the sacraments, those of the North still pleading for patient delay. The latter met in Conference at Judge White's residence, the retreat of Asbury, in Delaware; the former at Brockenback Church, Fluvanna county, Virginia, where they made their own appointments, and proceeded to ordain themselves by the hands of three of their senior members, unwilling that their people should longer be denied their right to the Lord's Supper, and their children and probationary members the rite of baptism. At the session of 1780 Asbury was authorized to visit the southern preachers, and, if possible, conciliate them. He met them in Conference; they appeared determined not to recede, but at last consented to suspend the administration of the sacraments till further advice could be received from Wesley. The breach was thus happily repaired, but must

evidently soon again be opened if redress should not be obtained.[59]

What could Wesley do under these circumstances? What but exercise the right of Ordination which he had for years theoretically claimed, but practically and prudently declined? He had importuned the authorities of the English Church in behalf of the Americans. In this very year he had written two letters to Lowth, Bishop of London, imploring ordination for a single preacher, who might appease the urgency of the American brethren, by traveling among them as a presbyter, and by giving them the sacraments; but the request was denied, Lowth replying that "there are three ministers in that country already." "What are these," rejoined Wesley, "to watch over all that extensive country? I mourn for poor America, for the sheep scattered up and down therein—part of them have no shepherds at all, and the case of the rest is little better, for their shepherds pity them not."[60] If there was any imprudence on the part of Wesley in this emergency, it was certainly in his long-continued patience, for he delayed yet nearly four years. When he yielded, it was only after the triumph of the American arms and the acknowledged independence of the colonies; and not then till urged to it by his most revered counselors. Fletcher, of Madeley, was one of these. That good man's interest for American Methodism should endear his memory to the American Church. He had thoughts at one time of going to the New World and of giving himself to its struggling societies, but his feeble health forbade him. He arrived from Switzerland in the spring of 1781, and hastening to his friend Ireland, at Brislington, met there Rankin, who had returned from America. They had not seen each other for more than ten years. "His looks, his salutation, and his address," says Rankin, "struck me with a mixture of wonder, solemnity, and joy." They retired into Ireland's garden, where they could converse with more freedom. Fletcher then began to inquire concerning the work of God

[59] Bangs's Hist. M. E. Church, vol. i, pp. 135–7. [60] Works, vol. vii, p. 231.

in America, and Rankin's labors during the five years he had spent there. Rankin gave him a full account of everything that he wished to know. While he was giving this statement, Fletcher stopped him six times, under the shade of the trees, and broke out into prayer to God for the prosperity of the American brethren. "He appeared," says Rankin, "to be as deeply interested in behalf of our suffering friends as if they had been his own flock at Madeley. He several times called upon me, also, to commend them to God in prayer. This was an hour never to be forgotten by me while memory remains."[61]

Fletcher was present with Wesley and Coke at the Leeds Conference of 1784, and there, with his assistance,[62] the question was brought to an issue. Wesley had previously consulted with Coke respecting it. He represented to Coke that as the Revolution had separated the United States from the mother country, and the Episcopal Establishment was utterly abolished in the states, it became his duty, as providentially at the head of the Methodist societies, to obey their demand and furnish for them the means of grace. He referred to the example of the Alexandrian Church, which, at the death of its bishops, provided their successors through ordination by its presbyters—a historical fact exemplified during two hundred years. Recognized as their founder by the American Methodists, required by them to provide for their new necessities, and unable to induce the English prelates to do so, he proposed to ordain Coke that he might go to the American societies as their superintendent or bishop, ordain their preachers, and thus afford them the sacraments with the least possible irregularity. Coke hesitated, but in two months wrote to Wesley accepting the office.[63] Accordingly, accompanied by Rev. James Creighton, a presbyter of the Church of England, Coke met him at Bristol, and on the second of September,

[61] Benson's Life of Fletcher, chap. 7.

[62] Coke's Letter to Wesley, Smith's History of Wesleyan Methodism, vol. i, book ii, chap. 6.

[63] Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 5.

1784, was ordained *superintendent or bishop of the Methodist societies in America;* an act of as high propriety and dignity as it was of urgent necessity. Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey were at the same time ordained presbyters; and on the third of November, attended by his two presbyters, (the number necessary to assist a bishop in ordination, according to the usages of the English Church,) Coke arrived in the Republic, and proceeded to ordain Francis Asbury, first as a deacon, then as a presbyter, and finally as a bishop, and to settle the organization of American Methodism, one of the most important ecclesiastical events (whether for good or evil) of the eighteenth century, or indeed since the Reformation, as its historical consequences attest.

The Colonial English Church being dissolved by the Revolution, its dwindled fragments were yet floating, as had been the Methodist societies, on the stormy tide of events. Methodism preceded it in reorganization. The Methodist bishops were the first Protestant bishops, and Methodism was the first Protestant episcopal Church of the New World; and as Wesley had given it the Anglican Articles of Religion, (omitting the seventeenth, on Predestination,) and the Liturgy, wisely abridged, it became, both by its precedent organization and its subsequent numerical importance, the real successor to the Anglican Church in America.

Of course this extraordinary but necessary measure met with opposition from Charles Wesley. He still retained his High Church opinions; he denounced the ordinations as schism; with his usual haste he predicted that Coke would return from "his Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore" to "make us all Dissenters here." The poet was no legislator; he became pathetic in his remonstrances to his brother; "alas!" he wrote, "what trouble are you preparing for yourself, as well as for me, and for your oldest, truest, best friends! Before you have quite broken down the bridge, stop and consider! If your sons have no regard for you, have some for yourself. Go to your grave in peace; at least suffer me to go first, before this ruin is under your hand." He did

soon after go to his grave in peace, except the alarms of his imaginary fears, and the only evidence of the predicted "ruin" is seen to-day in the prevalent and permanent success of Methodism in both hemispheres.

The next year after the ordination of Coke, Wesley records in his Journal: "I was now considering how strangely the grain of mustard-seed, planted about fifty years ago, had grown up. It spread through all Great Britain and Ireland, the Isle of Wight, and the Isle of Man; then to America, through the whole continent, into Canada, the Leeward Islands, and Newfoundland. And the societies in all these parts walk by one rule, knowing religion is holy tempers, and striving to worship God, not in form only, but likewise in spirit and in truth." His policy becomes more and more liberal as he now finds it necessary to fortify his cause before his approaching death. The following year (1786) he ordained six or seven more preachers, sending some to Scotland, and others to the West Indies,[64] but he ordained none as yet for England, where he and his clerical friends could partially supply the sacraments. Three years later he ordained Mather, Rankin, and Moore.[65] About a score of lay preachers received ordination from his hands, and for no other purpose but that they might administer the sacraments in cases of necessity.

Thus did providential events give shape and security to Methodism, as its aged leader approached his end.

[64] Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 26.

[65] "To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper according to the usages of the Church of England," says the certificate of ordination; (see it in Life of Henry Moore, p. 134, Am. ed.;) and yet a living Churchman (Dr. Pusey's Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 151) says that "Wesley reluctantly took the step of ordaining at all;" and that "to the last *he refused, in the strongest terms, his consent that those thus ordained should take upon them to administer the sacraments.* He felt that it exceeded his powers, and so inhibited it, however it might diminish the numbers of the society he had formed." The biographers of Wilberforce (vol. i, p. 248) also say: "Nor were any of his preachers *suffered during his lifetime to attempt to administer the sacraments of his Church.*" It is high time that such fictions should cease among English Churchmen. It seems that they have yet to learn how thorough and noble a heretic Wesley really was.

CHAPTER VII.

DID WESLEY DESIGN, BY HIS ORDINATION OF COKE, TO CONFER ON HIM THE OFFICE OF A BISHOP, AND TO CONSTITUTE THE AMERICAN METHODIST SOCIETIES AN EPISCOPAL CHURCH?

The Question stated — Preliminaries of the Argument — Wesley's Opinions on Church Government — The Argument as deduced from the Records and Incidents of Coke's Ordination and of the Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church — Summary View of the Argument — Its demonstrative Result — Providential Expediency of the Title of Bishop among the American Methodists.

No act of Wesley's public life has been more misrepresented, if not misunderstood, than his ordination of Coke, and the consequent episcopal organization of his American societies. Churchmen, so called, have especially insisted that he did not design to confer upon Coke the character of a bishop; that Coke's new office was designed to be a species of supervisory appointment, vague and contingent —something widely different from episcopacy, however difficult to define; and that, therefore, the distinct existence of American Methodism, as an episcopal Church, is a fact contrary to the intention of Wesley.

No extant forensic argument, founded upon documentary evidence, is stronger than would be a right collocation of the evidence which sustains the claim of American Methodism respecting this question. All Methodist authorities, British as well as American, support that claim; its proofs have been more or less cited, again and again, but they have not usually been drawn out in detail. Presented in their right series they become absolutely decisive, and must conclude the controversy with all candid minds. It is

appropriate at this point of our narrative to review the argument. In stating the facts which compose it, in their successive relations one to another, some repetition will be necessary; but the highest logic—mathematical demonstration itself—is that in which not only the postulates, but the successive proofs, most often recur to strengthen the advancing demonstration.

It has been seen that, as before the American Revolution the two countries were under one government, the two Methodist bodies were also. Wesley's "Minutes" were the Discipline of the American as well as the British Methodists; and Asbury represented his person in America, vested with much greater powers than have since belonged to the American Methodist bishops. Thus was the American Church governed, for years, by the paternal direction of Wesley. It has been further shown that, as none of the American preachers were ordained, the societies were dependent for the sacraments, upon the clergy of the English Church in the colonies; that at the Revolution most of these left the country, and the Methodists were thereby deprived of those means of grace; that many societies insisted upon having them without ordination; that a general strife ensued, and a large portion of the Southern societies revolted; that a compromise was effected until they could apply to Wesley for powers to ordain and to administer the sacraments; and that, in meeting their demand, he ordained and sent over Dr. Coke, with episcopal powers, under the name of superintendent, to ordain Francis Asbury a "joint superintendent," and to ordain the preachers to the offices of deacons and elders. He sent also a printed liturgy, or "Sunday Service," containing, besides the usual prayers, forms for "ordaining superintendents, elders, and deacons," the "Articles of Religion," and "A Collection of Psalms and Hymns." Coke also bore from him a circular letter to the societies, stating reasons for the new measures, the chief one being the demand of the American societies. When Coke arrived, the preachers assembled in

Baltimore to receive him and the new arrangements borne by him from Wesley. The adoption of the provisions thus made by Wesley, at the request of "some thousands of the inhabitants of these states," is what is called the "organization" of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The "Minutes," which had before been the law of the Church, were continued, with such additions as were required by these new arrangements. There was no revolution of the Church polity, and no new powers were imparted to Asbury, except authority to ordain. Everything proceeded as before, except that the Methodist societies no longer depended upon the Church of England for the sacraments, but received them from their own preachers. Thus, then, it appears that the so-called "organization" of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at Baltimore, was simply and substantially the adoption of the system appointed by Wesley. In respect to the very term "episcopal" itself, the Conference of Baltimore said, in their "Minutes" of the so-called organization, that, "following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, *who recommended the episcopal mode* of Church government, we thought it best to become an episcopal Church."[1] The Minutes containing this declaration were, six months afterward, in the hands of Wesley, and were published in England without a word of disapprobation from him; and when Coke was attacked in an English pamphlet for his proceedings at Baltimore, he publicly defended himself by declaring that he had "done nothing without the direction of Mr. Wesley;" this he did in a publication, under the eye of Wesley.[2]

It should be frankly admitted, however, that Wesley, while he established the American episcopacy, did not approve the use of the title of "bishop," because of the adventitious dignities associated with it. But let it be borne in

[1] Minutes of 1785, in Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the M. E. Church, vol. i, p. 22. New York, 1840.

[2] Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 6. His assailant is supposed to have been Charles Wesley. Etheredge's Coke, book ii, chap. 7.

mind that the American societies had been in existence nearly four years under the express title of an "Episcopal Church," with the uninterrupted approbation of Wesley, before the name bishop was personally applied to their superintendents.[3] Not till this term was so applied did he demur. He then wrote a letter to Bishop Asbury, objecting strongly to his being "called a bishop."[4] And it is on this letter, more than anything else, that the opponents of Methodism have founded their allegation that Wesley did not design to establish the American Methodist episcopacy, but that Coke and the Baltimore Conference exceeded his intentions in assuming it. Quotations from this letter have been incessantly given, in a form adapted only to produce a false effect, for the letter can be rightly comprehended only by the aid of the historical facts of the case.

Did Wesley, then, design, by his ordination of Coke, to confer on him the office of a bishop, and to constitute the American Methodist societies an episcopal Church? Three things are to be assumed as preliminary to this inquiry:

1. That Wesley was a decided Episcopalian. What man was ever more attached to the national episcopacy of England? We have already cited proofs that he believed the "episcopal form of Church government to be Scriptural and apostolical," that is, "well agreeing with the practice and writings of the apostles;" though that it is prescribed in Scripture he did not believe.

[3] It had been used, however, all this time, in the Minutes, as explanatory of the word "superintendent." The Minutes say that, "following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the episcopal mode of Church government, we thought it best to become an episcopal Church, making the episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent, or *bishop*, amenable to the body of ministers and preachers." Minutes, vol. i, p. 22. New York, 1840.

[4] In his letter to Asbury, he says: "One instance of this, your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me *bishop!* For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this!" Letter 780, Works, vol. vii, p. 187.

2. That Wesley, while he believed in episcopacy, belonged to that class of Episcopalians who contend that episcopacy is not a distinct order, but a distinct office, in the ministry; that bishops and presbyters, or elders, are of the same order, and have essentially the same prerogatives; but that, for convenience, some of this order may be raised to the episcopal office, and some of the functions originally pertaining to the whole order, as ordination, for example, may be confined to them; the presbyter thus elevated being but *primus inter pares*—the first among equals—a presiding officer.[5]

3. That the words *episcopos*, (Greek,) *superintendent*, (Latin,) and *bishop* (English)[6] have the same meaning, namely, an overseer.

With these preliminaries, we recur to the questions, Did Wesley appoint Coke to the episcopal office? Did he establish the American Methodist episcopacy? Let us look at the evidence.

1. Wesley mentions, in Coke's certificate of ordination, as a reason for ordaining him, that the Methodists in America desired "still to adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England."[7] That Church in America was dissolved by the Revolution; he therefore appointed Coke, with an episcopal form of government, a ritual, and articles of religion, to meet the exigency. If Coke was appointed merely to some such indefinite and contingent supervisory office as "Church" writers allege, if he possessed not the authoritative functions of episcopacy, wherein did his appointment answer the purpose mentioned by Wesley—"the discipline of the Church of England?" Wherein consists the main feature of the discipline of the English Church? In its episcopal superintendence. Wherein does American Methodism resemble it? Certainly not in class-meetings, itinerancy,

[5] See his circular letter to the American Societies, Drew's Coke, chap. 5.

[6] Bishop (Saxon, bischop) is a corruption of the Latinized Greek word episcopus. Its analogy to the second and third syllables of the latter is obvious.

[7] Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 5.

and other characteristic peculiarities, but in its episcopal regimen. Wesley's language is without sense if this is not its meaning.

2. Why did Wesley attach so much importance to the appointment if it was of the secondary character alleged? He says in his circular letter, respecting Coke's ordination: "For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right by ordaining part of our traveling preachers; but I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belonged. But the case is widely different between England and America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish ministers; so that, for some hundred miles together, there are none either to baptize or administer the sacrament. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end!"

Scruples! What could have been his "scruples" about sending Coke on such a secondary errand as the opponents of the Methodist episcopacy assert? He had already sent Asbury and others to America, and to Asbury he had actually assigned such a special yet secondary office, but unaccompanied with the ordination and authority of episcopacy. This he had done years before, without any scruple whatever; but during all this time he had been scrupling about this new and solemn measure, till the Revolution relieved him by abolishing the jurisdiction of the English bishops in the colonies. There is certainly sheer absurdity in all this if Wesley merely gave to Coke and Asbury a sort of indefinite though special commission in the American Church, not including in it the distinctive functions of episcopacy. We can conceive of nothing in the nature of such a commission to excite such scruples — a commission which had long since been given to Asbury.

Again, when Wesley proposed to Coke his ordination to this new office, some six or seven months before it was conferred, Coke "was startled at a measure so unprecedented in

modern days," and doubted Wesley's authority to ordain him, as Wesley himself was not a bishop.[8] Wesley recommended him to read Lord King's Primitive Church, and gave him time to reflect. Coke passed two months in Scotland, and, on satisfying his doubts, wrote to Wesley, accepting the appointment, and was afterward ordained, with solemn forms and the imposition of hands, by Wesley, assisted by presbyters of the Church of England. What could have possibly been the pertinency of all these former scruples of Wesley, this surprise, and doubt, and delay of Coke, this reference to ecclesiastical antiquity, and to a book which demonstrates the right of presbyters to ordain bishops in given cases, and these solemn forms, if they related merely to the alleged species of appointment, especially as this very species of commission had already existed for some years in the person of Asbury?

3. It is evident, beyond all question, that Wesley did not consider this solemn act in the subordinate sense of an appointment, but as an "ordination," using the word in its strictest ecclesiastical application. In his circular letter he says: "For many years I have been importuned . . . to exercise this right by *ordaining* a part of our traveling preachers; but I have still refused . . . because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church. . . . Here my scruples are at an end." Here the word ordaining is expressly used; and if the new appointment was not a regular "ordination," but a species of nondescript commission, solemnized by the mere forms of ordination, how could it be an interference with the "established order of the national Church?" How, especially, could it be such an interference, in any important sense different from that which Wesley had already, for years, been exercising without "scruple," in sending to America his unordained preachers? It was clearly an ordination, in the ecclesiastical sense of the term; but there have been only three ordinations claimed in the Christian world; namely,

[8] Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 5.

to the offices of, 1. Deacons; 2. Elders or presbyters; and, 3. Bishops. If, then, Coke was ordained by Wesley, and was not ordained a bishop, it becomes at once a pertinent but unanswerable question, to what was he ordained? He had been a presbyter for years. To what, then, did Wesley ordain him, if not to the next recognized office?

Let it be remembered that Whatcoat and Vasey were ordained elders for America at the time of Coke's ordination, but by a distinct act. If Coke did not receive a higher ordination, (that is, episcopal, for this is the only higher one,) why was he ordained separately from them, though on the same occasion? And why did Wesley, in his circular letter, declare to the American Methodists that, while Whatcoat and Vasey were "to act as elders among them," Coke and Asbury were "to be joint superintendents over them?"

4. Wesley, in his circular letter, appeals to Lord King's Sketch of the Primitive Church, to show that he, as a presbyter, had a right, under his peculiar circumstances, to perform these ordinations. Lord King establishes the second of the above preliminary statements, and the right of presbyters to ordain. And Wesley cites particularly his reference to the Alexandrian Church, where, on the decease of a bishop, the presbyters ordained his successor.

Why now this reference to Lord King and the Alexandrian Church—proving that presbyters could ordain—in justification of Wesley's proceedings, if he did not ordain? And if he did ordain Coke, it may again be asked, as Coke was already a presbyter, to what was he thus ordained, if it was not to the only remaining office—the episcopacy? And still more pointedly may it be asked, what propriety was there in Wesley's justifying himself by referring to the ordination of bishops by the presbyters of Alexandria, if he himself had not ordained a bishop?

5. Wesley prepared at this time a Prayer Book for the American Church — an abridgment of the English Liturgy —to be used under the new arrangement. It contains the

forms for the ordination of, 1. Deacons; 2. Elders; 3. Superintendents; and directs expressly that all preachers elected to the office of deacon, elder, or superintendent, shall be presented to the superintendent "to be ordained." Let it be remarked then, 1. That here the very word ordain is used. 2. We have here the three distinct offices of the ministry stated in order, according to the understanding of Wesley, and of all Episcopalians throughout the world. 3. That not only is the name of bishop changed to that of superintendent, but the name of presbyter, or priest, to that of elder—the new names being in both cases precisely synonymous with the old ones. If the change of the former name implies a difference in the office also, why does not the change in the latter imply the same? 4. These forms of ordination were taken from the forms in the English Liturgy for the ordination of deacons, presbyters, and bishops, the names of the latter two being changed to synonymous terms, namely, elders and superintendents. The opponents of the Methodist episcopacy readily grant that elder means presbyter, yet, as soon as superintendents are mentioned as bishops, they protest. 5. These forms show that Wesley not only created the Methodist episcopacy, but designed it to continue after Coke and Asbury's decease; they were printed for permanent use.

6. By reading Coke's letter to Wesley, consenting to and directing about his proposed ordination, it will be seen that Whatcoat and Vasey were ordained presbyters at Coke's request, because "propriety and universal practice," he says, "make it expedient that I should have two presbyters with me in this work."[9] That is, Coke requests, and Wesley grants, that two presbyters shall be ordained to accompany Coke in his new office, because "propriety and universal practice" require that two presbyters assist a bishop in ordaining; and yet Coke was not appointed to the office of a bishop! Coke, in this letter, let it be repeated, requests that these two men should be made "presbyters;" Wesley complies;

[9] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i, book ii, chap. vi, p. 541.

and yet, in the forms of the Prayer Book, or Discipline, they are called "elders." The name only was changed, therefore, not the thing; why then is not the inference just, that the other change in these forms, that of bishop to superintendent, is only in the name, not in the thing? The rule certainly ought to "work both ways."

7. Charles Wesley was a rigid High Churchman, and opposed to all ordinations by his brother. The latter knew his views so well that he would not expose the present measure to interruption by acquainting him with it till it was consummated. Though Charles Wesley was a presbyter of the Church of England, and in the town at the time, yet other presbyters were summoned to meet the demand of "propriety and universal practice" on such occasions, while he was carefully avoided. Now why this remarkable precaution against the High Church prejudices of his brother respecting ordinations, if he did not in these proceedings ordain? If it be replied, that Charles was not only opposed to his brother's ordaining a bishop, but equally to his ordaining to the other offices of the ministry; and, therefore, the ordinations might have been confined to the latter, and yet such precautions be proper, it may then be asked again, how can we suppose Coke to be now ordained to these lower offices when he had already received them, and had exercised them for years?

8. As soon as Charles Wesley learned these proceedings he was profoundly afflicted. His correspondence with his brother[10] shows that he understood them in the manner that the American Methodists do, and Wesley never corrected this interpretation. He defends himself, but never denies the facts. Charles Wesley speaks of Coke's "Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore," alluding to the name assumed by the American Church at its organization in that city. Wesley, in his reply, utters not a word in denial or disapproval of this title, but simply vindicates the necessity of his course in respect to the American Methodists. Charles

[10] Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 26

Wesley, in response, speaks of the doctor's "ambition" and "rashness." Wesley, though he knew the Church had been organized at Baltimore with the title of "Episcopal," and had used the very word "bishop," but not as a personal title, says: "I believe Dr. Coke as free from ambition as covetousness. He has done nothing rashly that I know." Charles Wesley, in his letter to Dr. Chandler, a clergyman about to sail for America, speaks of his brother having "assumed the episcopal character, ordained elders, *consecrated a bishop*, and sent him to ordain our lay preachers in America;" showing thus what the office really was, though the name was changed. Evidently it was only the appellation of bishop, applied to the superintendents in person, that Wesley disapproved.

9. The Conference at which the Church was organized terminated January 1, 1785. The Minutes were published by Coke with the title, "General Minutes of the Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America." The Minutes, as has been stated, expressly say that the American societies were formed into an Episcopal Church, and this, too, at the "recommendation" of Wesley. By July, Coke was with Wesley at the British Conference. By the 26th of the preceding June, his own Journal, containing this phrase, was inspected by Wesley. Coke also took to England the American Minutes, and they were printed on a press which Wesley used, and under his own eye. The Baltimore proceedings were therefore known to Wesley, but we hear of no remonstrance from him. They soon became known, by the Minutes, to the public; and when Coke was attacked publicly for what he had done, he replied, as we have seen, through the press, that "he had done nothing but under the direction of Mr. Wesley." Wesley never denied it. How are all these facts explicable, on the supposition that Coke and Asbury had ambitiously broken over Wesley's restrictions?

10. One of Charles Wesley's greatest fears was, as we have noticed, that the English preachers would be ordained

by Coke. He had prevailed upon his brother to refuse them ordination for years. He now writes, with deep concern, that "not a preacher in London would refuse orders from the doctor." "He comes armed with your authority to make us all Dissenters." Now, why all this sudden disposition of the English preachers to receive "orders from the doctor," if it was not understood that he had received episcopal powers, and they despaired of ever getting ordination from the national bishops? If it is replied, they believed, with Wesley, that, under necessary circumstances, presbyters could ordain, and therefore desired it from Coke, not in view of his new appointment, but because he was a presbyter of the Church of England, then it may be properly asked, why did they not seek it before, for Coke had been a presbyter among them for years? Why start up with such a demand all at once as soon as they learned of the new position of Coke? And how could Charles Wesley say, in this case, "He comes armed with your authority?" for his authority as a presbyter he obtained from a bishop of the English Church years before he knew Wesley.

11. The term bishop was not personally applied in the Discipline to the American superintendents till about three years after the "organization" of the Church, and Wesley's objurgatory letter to Asbury was not written till four years after it. During all this interval, however, the American societies were called an "Episcopal Church." Six months after adopting the name, its Minutes were, as stated, inspected by Wesley, and published under his auspices; they were called the "Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America;" and they expressly declare that, "following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the episcopal mode of Church government, we thought it best to become an Episcopal Church;" yet, as has been shown, during this long interim, Wesley never uttered a syllable against this assumption! When his brother writes him, accusing Coke of rashness, he replies that "the doctor has done nothing

rashly;" and when Coke is accused through the press, he declares, under Wesley's eye, and without contradiction, that "he had done nothing without the direction of Mr. Wesley." What now do all these incidents imply? What but that Wesley did approve the American episcopacy—that it was established by his direction? Yet four years after, when the appellation of bishop was applied personally to the American *episcopoi*, this letter of Wesley was written. What further does this imply? What but that it was not the thing he condemned, but the name; the thing had existed for years uncondemned, nay, defended by him; the very name "Episcopal," so far as it applied to the Church collectively, he did not condemn; but the personal title of bishop he disapproved, because of its objectionable associations. Is it possible to escape this inference?

Thus we see that, whatever view we take of the subject, we are compelled to one conclusion: that Wesley did create and establish the American Methodist episcopacy. The man who gainsays such evidence must be given up as incorrigible. There can be no reasoning with him.

And now, what is the sum of this evidence? It has already been presented with sufficient detail; but let us retrace the successive and decisive steps of the argument. Here we have Wesley proposing to establish "the discipline of the Church of England" among the American Methodists, and to do so he ordains for them bishops, and gives them an episcopal regimen; yet, according to their antagonists, he never designed them to be a distinct Church, but only a "society" in the Protestant Episcopal Church! Wesley and Coke have "scruples," delays, references to antiquity, imposition of hands, and other solemn forms, conforming to the "universal practice" of episcopal ordination; and yet all concerning some nondescript kind of appointment, analogous to that which is conferred upon a missionary, in charge over his brethren in a foreign station! Wesley speaks of it as "ordaining," and of his refusing to use the right before the Revolution because it would have

interfered with the "established order of the national Church;" and yet a mere secondary commission of Coke, such a one as had existed in the person of Asbury for years, is the momentous interference with the established order of the national Church — though there was nothing in that order with which it could interfere, the national Church never having had any such appointments! Wesley solemnly "ordains" Coke; and yet it is not to the episcopal office, though he had been ordained to all the other offices to which ordination is appropriate, years before! Wesley ordains two other men to the office of elders, and at the same time separately and formally ordains Coke, who had already borne this office; but still Coke's new office is not the only remaining one that could be conferred upon him! Wesley refers to the ordination of bishops by the presbyters of Alexandria, in justification of his ordination of Coke, and yet he does not ordain Coke a bishop! Wesley prepares for the American Church a Prayer Book, abridged from that of the Church of England, prescribing the English forms for the three offices of deacons, presbyters, and bishops; the two former are admitted unquestionably to be what they are in England, and yet the latter is explained into something new and anomalous, answering to nothing ever heard of in the Church of England or in any other episcopal Church! In these forms the old names of two of the offices are changed to new but synonymous appellations, that of presbyter or priest to elder, that of bishop to superintendent; in the former case the change of the name is not for a moment supposed to imply a change of the thing; and yet, in the other case, the change of the name invalidates entirely the thing, without a particle more evidence for it in the one case than in the other! Charles Wesley, being a High Churchman, is kept unaware of his brother's proceedings till they are accomplished, though he is in the town at the time of the ordination; and yet it is no ordination, but a species of appointment against which he could have had no episcopal prejudice whatever! When he learns the

facts he is overwhelmed with surprise, and in his correspondence exclaims against his "brother's consecration of a bishop," and "Dr. Coke's Methodist Episcopal Church" at Baltimore; and Wesley, in his replies, never denies these titles, but simply vindicates his ordinations, and says that Coke had "done nothing rashly;" yet there was no bishop, no episcopal office appointed, no distinct episcopal Church established, but Coke had fabricated the whole! When the preachers in England, trained under episcopacy, hear of Coke's new office, they are, to the great alarm of Charles Wesley, suddenly seized with a desire to be ordained by Coke, though they fully know that he is no bishop, but the same presbyter that he had been among them for years! In six months after the organization of the American Church, Coke publishes its Minutes, with the title, "Methodist Episcopal Church in America," in London, under the eye of Wesley, and in these Minutes it is declared that Wesley "recommended the episcopal mode of Church government;" but no remonstrance is heard from Wesley! When Coke is condemned through the press for his proceedings, he publicly replies that he had done "nothing without the direction of Mr. Wesley;" no rebuke follows from Wesley, but Coke goes on as usual, active in his Conferences, and maintained in his new position; and yet his American proceedings were an ambitious plot, contrary to the will of Wesley! The American Methodists had borne the title "Episcopal Church," with Wesley's full approval, for four years, when, on the use of the personal title of bishop, Wesley writes his letter to Asbury; and yet it is not the mere personal title he condemns, but the office which, for four years, he had left uncondemned, nay, had vindicated!

And now, looking again at this series of arguments, will not the American Methodists be acquitted of presumption when they assume that they may here make a triumphant stand, surrounded by evidence accumulated and impregnable? The noble ecclesiastical system under which it

has pleased God to give them and their families spiritual shelter and fellowship with his saints, and whose efficiency has surprised the Christian world, is not, as their opponents would represent, an imposition of their preachers, and contrary to the wishes of Wesley, but was legitimately received from his hands as the providential founder of Methodism.

If Wesley's strong repugnance to the mere name of bishop had been expressed before its adoption by the American Church, it would probably not have been adopted. Still, the American Church was now a separate organization, and was at perfect liberty to dissent from Wesley on a matter of mere expediency. The Church thought it had good reasons to use the name. The American Methodists were mostly of English origin. The people of their country among whom Methodism was most successful, were either from England or of immediate English descent, and had been educated to consider episcopacy a wholesome and apostolical government of the Church. The Church approved and had the office, why not, then, have the name? especially as, without the name, the office itself would be liable to lose, in the eyes of the people, its peculiar character, and thereby fail in that appeal to their long established opinions which Methodism had a right, both from principle and expediency, to make? The English Establishment having been dissolved in this country, and the Protestant Episcopalians not being yet organized on an independent basis, and the episcopal organization of the Methodists having preceded that of the Protestant Episcopalians, the Methodist Church had a clear right to present itself to the American public as competent to aid in supplying the place of the abolished Establishment, having the same essential principles without its peculiar defects.

May not the circumstance of the assumption of an episcopal character, nominally as well as really, by the American Methodists, be considered providential? Episcopacy, both in America and England, has reached an

excess of presumption and arrogance. The moderate party, once declared by Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, to include a large majority of American Episcopalians,[11] has nearly disappeared. Was it not providential, under these circumstances, that a body of Christians should appear, exceeding every other in success, and nominally and practically bearing an episcopal character, without any of its presumptuous pretensions? Amid the uncharitable assumptions of prelatical Episcopalians, the Methodist Episcopal Church stands forth a monument of the laborious and simple episcopacy of the early ages; its success, as well as its humility, contrasting it signally with its more pretentious but feebler sister. It has thus practically vindicated episcopacy as an expedient form of ecclesiastical government, and assuredly it needs vindication in these days.

Such, then, is the evidence which should, with all men of self-respectful candor, conclude decisively the question of Wesley's design and agency in the organization of American Methodism.

Driven from this ground, objectors retreat to an equally untenable one, by alleging that the episcopal organization of the societies in America is to be attributed to the influence of ambitious counselors over Wesley, in the imbecility of his old age. It has already been shown that he as yet betrayed no such imbecility; but it has still more conclusively been demonstrated that the ecclesiastical opinions which sanction this great act, were adopted in the prime of his manhood. They were the well-considered and fully demonstrated convictions of two score years, before he yielded to the unavoidable necessity of giving them practical effect. Few facts in the history of Methodism are more interesting and instructive than the gradual development of Wesley's own mind and character under his extraordinary and accumulating responsibilities; it has therefore been studiously traced throughout the preceding pages. No reader who has

[11] Case of the Prot. Epis. Church in the United States, etc., p. 25.

followed this narrative will need an additional word in refutation of this last objection to the American Methodist episcopacy, and no possible ground of argument remains for its opponents but the prelatical charge against its legitimacy, founded in the traditional and exploded ecclesiasticism of obsolete ages. Methodists are content, with Wesley, to pronounce the apostolic succession "a fable which no man ever did, or ever can prove," and believe that, in this age, they need not anxiously challenge any advantage which their opponents can claim from a pretension so incompatible alike with the letter and the charity of the Gospel, as well as with the Christian enlightenment of modern times.[12]

[12] Wesley was in good company among Churchmen in his denunciation of the "fable" of the succession. Chillingworth said, "I am fully persuaded there hath been no such succession." Bishop Stillingfleet declares that "this succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself." Bishop Hoadley asserts: "It hath not pleased God, in his providence, to keep up any proof of the least probability, or moral possibility, of a regular uninterrupted succession; but there is a great appearance, and, humanly speaking, a certainty, to the contrary, that the succession hath often been interrupted." Archbishop Whately says "there is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with approach to certainty, his spiritual pedigree."

CHAPTER VIII.

LABORS OF WESLEY FROM 1785 TO 1790.

Wesley itinerating in Extreme Age — Field Preaching — Howard, the Philanthropist — Scenes of Itinerancy — Wesley's last Northern Tour — His Power in the Pulpit continues — Last Scenes at Newcastle — Wesley in his Eighty-eighth Year — Crabbe the Poet.

Wesley had fortified his cause against the day of his death, by the important measures reviewed in the last two chapters. We turn from these great deeds to follow him in his itinerant labors, during the last half of this decade, with increased, with inexpressible interest—an interest which the historian must feel to be legitimate to his narrative, and yet perilous to its credibility with readers who do not turn from his pages to his original authorities. Larger congregations than ever throng to hear the wonderful old man, for already it is seen that he is one of the great characters of history: and the long tested purity and philanthropy of his life; his ability; his usefulness, imprinted on most of the geography of the realm; and his persistent travels and preaching, at an age when most men sink into dotage or the grave, are a marvel if not a miracle to the popular mind. Every day his voice is still heard somewhere "sounding the alarm" at five o'clock in the morning; nearly every evening the sun goes down upon him in some other place, after labors which most clergymen would deem the sufficient work of a week. He has chapels of his own, scattered over the whole country, and the national churches are now frequently and with eagerness thrown open to him; but he is still almost daily proclaiming his message in the fields and on the highways to masses which no building in the United Kingdom could

accommodate. Field-preaching was still his boast for Methodism; he had no more disposition to abandon it himself, or to have his followers abandon it after his death, at least while any considerable number of the people came not to the churches, than a veteran general would be disposed to abandon the open "campaigns," in which he had won his laurels, to fight, the rest of his life, cooped up within the straitened limits of fortresses.

On completing his eighty-second year (1785) he records, as we have seen, no symptom of old age except his gray hairs; he has not known even "weariness" for eleven years. The next year he is "still a wonder to himself;" he is "never tired either with writing, preaching, or traveling." In 1787 he forgets to speak of himself on his birthday; he speaks only of another—a congenial mind whom the world still recognizes as his fellow-representative of the best spirit of those times, and whose name has the peculiar and enviable fate of being distinguishable to his countrymen, only by the noblest affix. Howard, "the philanthropist," called upon him in Ireland. They were ardent friends; how could Wesley and Howard have been anything else?

Howard turned not aside, in his missions of mercy, to see any curiosities of nature or art, not even the Coliseum when in Rome; but the great Methodist he could not pass. At his visit to Wesley the present year, the latter pronounced him, in his Journal, "one of the greatest men in Europe." "Nothing but the mighty power of God," he adds, "can enable him to go through his difficult and dangerous employments." He went from Dublin to Londonderry, where he sought out an eminent friend of Wesley, who says: "He came to see me, because he understood I was Mr. Wesley's friend: he began immediately to speak of him; he told me he had seen him shortly before in Dublin; that he had spent some hours with him, and was greatly edified by his conversation. 'I was encouraged by him,' he said, 'to go on vigorously with my own designs: I saw in him how much a single man might achieve by zeal and perseverance; and I

thought, why may not I do as much in my way as Mr. Wesley has done in his, if I am only as assiduous and persevering? and I determined I would pursue my work with more alacrity than ever.'"[1]

With so many public advantages clearly attributable to Methodism, it may seem unnecessary to ascribe to it any of the usefulness of this remarkable man's life and example; but he has himself made the acknowledgment even more directly than in these allusions. Subsequently to this interview, before leaving England for his last and fatal visit to the Continent, he called to take leave of Wesley at City Road Chapel parsonage, "carrying his last quarto upon the jails under his arm." Wesley was absent, but the philanthropist must stay and talk an hour with Henry Moore about his old friend and his own projects. He "delightfully called to mind the former days when he had first heard Wesley at his seat in Bedfordshire, and well recollected the discourse which made the first impression on his mind." The text was, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." Eccl. ix, 10. "I have," added Howard, "but one thing to do, and I strive to do it with my might. The Lord has taken away whatever might have been an incumbrance: all places are alike to me, for I find misery in all. Present my respects and love to Mr. Wesley; tell him I had hoped to have seen him once more: perhaps we may meet again in this world, but if not, we shall meet, I trust, in a better."[2]

[1] Alexander Knox, Esq. See Moore's Life, p. 290. "I cannot quit this subject," says Knox, "without observing that, excepting Mr. Wesley, no man ever gave me a more perfect idea of angelic goodness than Mr. Howard: his whole conversation exhibited a most interesting tissue of exalted piety, meek simplicity, and glowing charity. His striking adieu I shall never forget. 'Farewell, sir,' said he, 'when we meet again may it be in heaven, or farther on our way to it.' Precious man, may your prayer be answered! 'May my soul be with thine!'"

[2] Life of Rev. Henry Moore, p. 291. Am. ed. Moore adds: "We hung upon his lips delighted: such a picture of love, simplicity, and cheerfulness we have seldom seen."

On his next birthday Wesley first records symptoms of old age: "I this day enter on my eighty-fifth year. How little have I suffered yet, by 'the rush of numerous years?'" But he acknowledges that he is not as agile as formerly. He cannot walk as fast as he did; his sight is a little decayed; his left eye has grown dim, and hardly serves him to read; he has daily some pain in the ball of his right eye, as also in his right temple, (occasioned by a blow received some months before,) and in his right shoulder and arm, which he imputes partly to a sprain, and partly to rheumatism. He finds also some decay in his memory, with regard to names and things lately past; but not at all with regard to what he had read or heard, twenty, forty, or sixty years before; neither does he find any change in his hearing, smell, taste, or appetite, though he needs but a third part of the food he once used; nor does he feel any weariness, either in traveling or preaching; and he is not conscious of any decay in writing sermons, which he does as readily, and, he believes, as correctly as ever. "To what cause," he asks, "can I impute this, that I am as I am? First, doubtless to the power of God fitting me for the work to which I am called, as long as he pleases to continue me therein; and next, subordinately to this, to the prayers of his children." He mentions also "inferior means:" his early rising; having sleep always at command, for "he called it and it came day or night;" his constant travels; and his preaching at five in the morning for more than fifty years.

The next year decay comes on apace. He enters on his eighty-sixth year. "I now find I grow old," he says. His sight is decayed; he cannot read small print, unless in a strong light. His strength is diminished; so that he walks much slower than had been usual with him, for his motions had always been rapid, and arrested the attention of spectators, in the streets, as of a man intent on some important errand. His memory of names, whether of persons or places, is enfeebled; he must stop a little to recollect them.

"What I should be afraid of," he adds, "is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind, and create, either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness, by the increase of bodily infirmities; but thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God."

On the first day of 1790 he writes: "I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot." His eyes are dim; his right hand shakes much; his mouth is hot and dry every morning; he has a lingering fever almost every day; his motion is weak and slow. "However, blessed be God!" he says, "I do not slack my labor; I can preach and write still."

During these latter five years his labors scarcely suffer diminution. He seems disposed to take advantage of his enlarged congregations, and the increased popular interest for him, to render the last days of his great career more useful than the first. He hastens over England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland repeatedly, often turning aside with special interest to Cornwall. At Redruth he preaches in the street to "thousands on thousands;" two or three thousands more than were ever seen there before. At his next visit the crowd was still greater; they not only filled the street and all the windows, but sat upon the house-tops. Gwennap, and all the regions round about, poured into its amphitheater "more than ever were there before;" "but it was all one," he says; "my voice was strengthened accordingly, so that every one could hear distinctly." At Falmouth he writes: "The last time I was here, above forty years ago, I was taken prisoner by an immense mob, gaping and roaring like lions; but how is the tide turned! High and low now lined the street from one end of the town to the other, out of stark love and kindness, gaping and staring as if the king were going by. In the evening I preached on the smooth top of the hill, at a small distance from the sea, to the largest congregation I have ever seen in Cornwall, except in or near Redruth. And such a time I have not known before since

I returned from Ireland. God moved wonderfully on the hearts of the people, who all seemed to know the day of their visitation."

At Helstone he preached a midday sermon, in the high street, to the largest and most serious congregation which he had ever seen there. At Newlyn and Penzance it was impossible to occupy the chapels. He had to go out to the vast crowds. "I know not that I ever spent," he says, "such a week in Cornwall;" "the word of God seemed to sink into every heart." At St. Ives he could say: "Nearly forty years' labor has not been in vain here. Well nigh all the town attended, and with all possible seriousness." At Port Isaac he preached to almost all the inhabitants; "how changed," he writes, "since the time when he that invited me durst not take me in, for fear his house would be pulled down!"

Similar scenes occurred almost everywhere on his long routes. In Ireland he was followed with enthusiasm, and "the work was increasing in every part of the kingdom more than it had done for many years." The Dublin Society had "outrun" (in 1787) "all in England but that of London." He subsequently finds that the communicants at St. Patrick's are more numerous, at one time, than they used to be through the whole year, before Methodism reached the city; and still later, he went to its altar with such a company as he supposes "had not been seen there for above a hundred years." At the cathedral in Limerick he was even invited to assist in the administration of the Eucharist; a fact which he considered a condescension on the part of its clergy, but which history will record as an honorable reminiscence of the old edifice. On approaching Cork he was met by a cortege of thirty men on horseback, who conducted him into the city, once the scene of his fiercest persecutions in Ireland. There were now four hundred Methodists in it. "In the afternoon," he writes, "I stood in the vacant space near the preaching-house, capable of containing many thousands. An immense number assembled. There was no

disturbance; the days of tumult here are over, and God has now of a long season made our enemies to be at peace with us."

At his next visit he dines with a Roman priest, Father O'Leary, his "old antagonist" in a newspaper dispute on popery, and both were good enough scholars and gentlemen to make themselves mutually agreeable.[3] He was received at the Mansion House, and conducted by the mayor through the charitable institutions of the city. Cork had now become "the Capua of his preachers," and he almost feared the hospitality that had taken the place of the old trials under which they had grown brave and strong. At Aughalan he found such a congregation as he had never seen in the kingdom. The tent, or canvas covered pulpit, was placed at the foot of a green, sloping mountain, on the side of which the huge multitude sat, row above row. While he was explaining, "God has given unto us his Holy Spirit," a divine influence seemed to descend upon the assembly. Tears of joy were shed, and cries were heard on every side, only so far suppressed as not to drown his voice. "I cannot but hope," he says, "that many will have cause to bless God for that hour to all eternity." He preached in the market-house at Enniskillen, "formerly a den of lions," he writes; "but the lions are become lambs. They flocked together from every part, and were all attention. Before I had half done, God made bare his arm, and the mountains flowed down at his presence. Many were cut to the heart, and many rejoiced with joy unspeakable; surely the last shall be first, and poor Enniskillen shall lift up its head above many of the places where the Gospel has been long preached." In the evening he addressed another numerous congregation at Sidare, at the foot of the mountains. "One would wonder," he says, "whence all the people came. They seemed to spring out of the earth. Here, also, there were once many bitter persecutors; but they are vanished away like smoke. Several of them, indeed,

[3] See "Letters to the Freeman's Journal," Works, vol. v.

came to a fearful end, and their neighbors took warning by them."

At Kenagh he addressed a large congregation, and writes that "for many years we seemed to be beating the air here; but a few months since God so blessed the preaching of poor John Bredin, just tottering over the grave, that we have now a lively society, swiftly increasing in both grace and numbers." At Athlone he found "the work of God much increased," and the three ministers of the town had become favorable to the Methodist evangelists. He was admitted to the church at Aughrim, and it was "filled as it scarce ever had been," and "God enabled me," he adds, "to find the way to the hearts of both Protestants and Roman Catholics. I never saw so general an impression made upon the hearts of this people before." He still found that the army afforded good auxiliaries to Methodism. At Kilkenny he says: "Religion was here at a low ebb, and scarce any society left, when God sent three troops of horse, several of whom are full of faith and love. Since they came the work of God has revived. I never saw the house so filled since it was built, and the power of God seemed to rest upon the congregation as if he would still have a people in this place." At Carlow he preached to the most affected congregation he had seen there; and he writes: "Here is a plentiful harvest; the rather because several of the troopers quartered here are much alive to God, and 'adorn in all things the doctrine of God our Saviour.'" At Pallas, twelve miles from Limerick, "all the remains" of his old friends, the Palatine German Irish, whose emigrant brethren had founded Methodism in America, came to salute him from Balligarane, Court Mattress, and Ratheal; "in all which places an uncommon flame had lately broken out, such as was never seen before. Many in every place had been deeply convinced, many converted to God, and some perfected in love." Some of their societies had doubled in number, some had increased six or even tenfold. All the neighboring gentry

were likewise gathered at Pallas, so that no house could contain them, and he was obliged to stand abroad. "The people," he writes, "swallowed every word, and great was our rejoicing in the Lord."

Decaying then, as he is in body, his soul is still on fire, and he is yet the flaming evangelist he had been for half a century.

Among his older societies in England, his visits are attended with unprecedented success and affecting interest. The age of the venerable man saddens the people more than himself. Toward the close of this decade there are solemn leave-takings as he passes along his routes. At each visit they expect to see his face no more, and at every place, after giving to his societies what he wished them to receive as his last advice—*to love as brethren, to fear God, and honor the king*—he uniformly gives out and sings with them a hymn invoking a peaceful cessation of life on the day that there must be a cessation of his labors.[4]

His passages over the country are a sort of religious ovation. At Burslem he was to preach at five o'clock in the morning, but the eager people anticipated him, and, soon after four, he was saluted by a concert of music, both vocal and instrumental, at his gate, making the air ring with a hymn to the tune of Judas Maccabeus. It was a good prelude, he writes; "so I began almost half an hour before five; yet the house was crowded both above and below." The Methodists flock from place to place to hear him, for they know the privilege must soon cease. Companies go out to meet him, and conduct him into the towns. His preachers, who are now numerous in most parts of the land, gather in his assemblies, refreshing themselves by his ministrations and by their mutual greetings; he is to them as Elijah to

[4] Crowther's Portraiture of Methodism, p. 72. New York: 1813. The words were:

"O that without a lingering groan,
I may the welcome word receive;
My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live."

the "sons of the prophets"—a man who had uttered wondrous words and wrought miracles in Israel, and the day of whose ascension, in the chariot of fire, is at hand.

Fortunate would the artist have been who could have followed him, and preserved for his numerous people representations of the touching or grand scenes of these his last years—his preaching in the Gwennap amphitheater, to audiences such as Whitefield probably never saw; in Redruth street, with the wondering hosts hanging on the windows and roofs, as well as crowding the neighboring streets; his address in Newgate to forty-seven men who were under sentence of death, "the clink of whose chains was very awful," but most of whom sobbed with broken hearts while he proclaimed that "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth;" or the night scene, near Newcastle under Lyne, where the silvered locks of the tireless apostle gleamed in the clear moonlight as he stood, "in the piercing cold," preaching, under the village trees, to a multitude four times as large as could have got into the chapel.

His congregations were so much augmented that he was compelled to make unusual exertion in order to be heard by them. At Shaftesbury he preached to such an assembly as he had never seen there before, and among them stood respectfully the "gentleman" who, thirty years before, had sent his officer to order him out of the borough. At Blackburn no house could contain the people; he addressed them in the open air; the vast mass were "still as night" while he expounded "that awful Scripture, 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God,'" and when they sung "their voices were as the sound of many waters." At Bingley, Atmore, one of his itinerants, had to preach at the same time with him, so immense was the host. At Todmorden he writes, after his discourse, "How changed are both the place and the people since I saw them first! 'So the smiling fields are glad and the human savages are tame!'" At Ballast Hills he addressed "an amazing congregation;" it "was doubled" by that at Fell in the afternoon, and the latter still

doubled at Garth Heads at night. Three sermons a day were not unusual to him; they still number sometimes four a day. At Hull, where we have seen him mobbed at his first visit, stoned in his carriage as he rode through the streets, and the windows of his host's house all broken to the third story, he now preached to an immense assembly in the principal church. "Who," he writes, "would have expected, a few years since, to see me preaching in the high church at Hull!" At Barnsley he addressed, near the market-place, a great congregation, and "the word of God sank into many hearts;" "formerly," he says, "it was famous for all manner of wickedness; they were then ready to tear any Methodist preacher in pieces; now not a dog wagged his tongue." At Newark the town authorities, mayor and aldermen, requested him to preach at a convenient hour for them to hear him, and all came; a striking enough contrast with what used to be his reception from the magistrates of most towns. At Plymouth he had to be lifted over the seats to the pulpit; the crowd was impenetrable, and such a number of communicants he supposes was never seen before at Plymouth Dock. After "a solemn parting," he writes, "we took coach, leaving such a flame behind as was never kindled here before. God grant it may never be put out." At Exeter "God uttered his voice, and that a mighty one;" he knew not that he had ever seen such an impression on the people of that town. At Chester he addressed a congregation larger, he estimates, than he had ever had anywhere. At Balston five regular clergymen were with him, and helped him to administer the Eucharist to twelve or thirteen hundred communicants. "I took a solemn leave," he adds, as usual now; "here, at least, it undeniably appears that we have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." At Castle Carey he writes: "How are the times changed! The first of our preachers that came hither the zealous mob threw into the horse-pond; now high and low earnestly listen to the word that is able to save their souls." At Gloucester, also, the "scandal of the cross had ceased; high and low,

rich and poor, flocked together, and seemed to devour the word. Many were cut to the heart, for it was a day of the Lord's power."

It would seem indeed that never had his preaching been attended with more vivid effect than now, (in his eighty-fifth year;) continually we read of the "power of the word," of the weeping, and sometimes of the outcries and prostration of his hearers. Under his prayer, in the society at Coleford, "the flame broke out; many cried, many sank to the ground, and many were troubled exceedingly." Such noises, and the confusion produced by the eagerness of the people to hear him, were now the only disturbances he met; he had outlived all others, though some of his preachers had yet to encounter them. Even at Oxford, memorable place to him, the pressing crowd, "by their eagerness to hear, defeated their own purpose."

In the beginning of 1790 a printed circular was issued containing the list of his northward appointments, beginning with Stroud and ending with Aberdeen.[5] His London brethren appended a postscript saying: "Our friends here earnestly desire that Mr. Wesley may be remembered in prayer, especially at the next Quarterly Fast, that his strength may be continued, and, if it please God, increased also." On this route he preached his last sermon at Newcastle. One of his preachers there has recorded, but too briefly, some particulars of the visit: "He appears very feeble; and no wonder, he being nearly eighty-eight years of age. His sight has failed so much that he cannot see to give out the hymn; yet his voice is strong, and his spirits remarkably lively. Surely this great and good man is the prodigy of the present age! He preached in the evening to the children of the Sunday school, from Psalm xxxiv, 11. It was calculated to profit both them and persons of riper years. This sermon was literally composed and delivered in words of not more than two syllables. A small party of us accompanied him to North

[5] Rev. John S. Stamp in Wesleyan Magazine, 1845, p. 119.

Shields, where he preached an excellent sermon from Phil. iii, 7. It was indeed a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. On the Lord's day, at two P. M., he went to Byker, and addressed several thousands of people in the open air, from Matt. vii, 24; and at five P. M., at the Orphan House, from Eph. ii, 8. The house was much crowded; many hundreds returned, not being able to obtain an entrance. On Monday he proceeded on his journey. He was highly honored in his ministry here, particularly to one who had been in a state of great despair for many years. As soon as he arrived at the Orphan House he inquired after this individual, and I accompanied him in visiting him. As he entered the room where the poor man was he went up to him, and, as a messenger from God, said, 'Brother, I have a word from God unto thee: Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.' He then knelt down to pray, and such a season I have seldom experienced. Hope instantly sprang up, and despair gave place; and although he had not been out of his habitation, nor even from his wretched bed, for several years, he went that evening to hear Mr. Wesley preach, while God graciously confirmed the testimony of his servant in restoring him to the 'light of his countenance.'"[6]

On the 28th of June, 1790, he enters into his eighty-eighth year. For above eighty-six years he had found, he says, none of the infirmities of old age; his sight did not wax dim, neither was his natural strength abated; but in the last August he experienced a sudden change. His eyes became so dim that no glasses could help them, and his strength likewise now quite forsook him. But he feels no pain from head to foot; "only it seems nature is exhausted, and, humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till the weary springs of life stand still at last."

Bending now with years, he has to be sustained by the arms of his friends along the streets, and helped into the

[6] Rev. Charles Atmore, Wesleyan Magazine, 1845, p. 120.

pulpit; but he moves on in his career, quoting cheerfully the classic poet, "'Tis time to live if I grow old."[7]

He had been compelled to give up his morning five o'clock sermon during several weeks, for his mouth was feverish and dry at that early hour, but he attempts to resume it, as if unwilling to yield a tittle to anything short of the invincible power of death itself.

But it was befitting he should depart to his rest; his work was done, sublimely done, and apparently secure forever. Most of his early fellow-laborers and fellow-sufferers for the faith had gone; some of the most eminent, as well as some of the humblest, had died during this decade; before we take our leave of him at the grave, let us turn a glance back upon some of the important transactions of this period, and upon a few of those heroes who lie fallen on the field upon which the veteran leader still moves and conquers.

[7] The son of Crabbe gives, in his biography of the poet, a brief scene in the last days of Wesley. "At Lowestoft, one evening, all adjourned to a Dissenting chapel, to hear the venerable John Wesley on one of the last of his peregrinations. He was exceedingly old and infirm, and was attended, almost supported, in the pulpit, by a young minister on each side. The chapel was crowded to suffocation. In the course of the sermon he repeated, though with an application of his own, the lines from Anacreon:

'Oft am I by women told,
Poor Anacreon! thou grow'st old;
See, thine hairs are falling all,
Poor Anacreon! how they fall!
Whether I grow old or no,
By these signs I do not know;
By this I need not to be told,
'Tis time TO LIVE, if I grow old.'

"My father was much struck by his reverend appearance, and his cheerful air, and the beautiful cadence he gave to these lines; and after the service he was introduced to the patriarch, who received him with benevolent politeness."

CHAPTER IX.

SKETCHES OF SOME OF WESLEY'S FELLOW-LABORERS WHO DIED IN THE PERIOD FROM 1780 TO 1790.

Robert Wilkinson — His Self-conflicts — His sublime Death — Thomas Payne — His early Adventures — He begins to Preach in the Army — His Death — Jacob Rowell — His singular Conversion — He becomes a Preacher — The Dales — First Methodist Society of Wensdale — Rowell's Travels and Trials — His powerful Preaching — Vincent Perronet — His Connection with Wesley — His Afflictions — Anecdote of Fletcher — Perronet's happy Death — He predicts the Permanent Success of Methodism — Fletcher — He marries Mary Bosanquet — Her early Life — Her Charities — Her Schools at Laytonstone and Cross Hall — Sarah Ryan — Margaret Lewen — Mrs. Crosby — Wesley's Views of Female Preaching — Fletcher's Piety — His Catholicity — His Charities — His remarkable Death — His Posthumous Influence in Madeley — Death of Charles Wesley — His Last Poetical Composition — His Habits and Character — Happy Deaths of Methodists — Remarkable Examples.

Robert Wilkinson died at the beginning of this period. He was a humble laborer, but a genuine hero in both life and death: "an Israelite indeed," says Wesley; "a man of faith and prayer, who having been a pattern of all good works, died in the triumph of faith." A sore struggle had this good man to get into the way to heaven, for his conscience was naturally sensitive, and the ignorance of all about him, respecting evangelical piety, was incredible. "The people saw my distress," he writes, "but, not knowing God, could not point out a cure." He gave up card playing and "vain songs," and even abandoned his favorite violin, but found no rest to his soul. The Methodist itinerants penetrated to his village; after hearing one of them he says that at night, on his bed, "the Lord cut him to the heart," and he could not help "roaring" for the disquietude of his soul.

"I felt," he adds, "that I must perish unless some way to escape were found which I knew not of." Immediately he wished the Methodists to pray with him, particularly a young man whose earnest life had deeply impressed him, and was afterward a model for his own; a youth who, from the day of his conversion, was a pattern to all the society; and who, after having walked four years in the light of God's countenance, died in the full assurance of faith, testifying for many months before his death that the blood of Christ had cleansed him from all sin, and uttering as his last words, 'Glory be to God, for ever and ever! Amen, and Amen!'"[1]

Wilkinson, whose mind was evidently morbid, sank deeper and deeper in despondency. He goes to a Methodist class. "What is the state of your soul?" asks the leader. "I am left without one spark of hope that God will ever have mercy upon me," cries out the heart-broken man; "for," he writes, "the enemy had suggested that I was guilty of a sin which God never would pardon." "No," replied the leader, "you are not, for if you were you would not now be using the means of grace!" The Methodist leaders knew how to meet the Adversary in such cases, for they had to encounter him often on that ground; they believed that no soul was hopeless, however guilty, in which the Divine Spirit could still inspire a good purpose. Deliverance came at last; the awakened man was enabled to believe that God for Christ's sake had forgiven all his sins, and found peace in thus believing. Spectators who knew his distress perceived by his countenance that "the Lord was gracious to him, before he had the opportunity to tell them. He then went rejoicing home, and could not help telling what God had done for his soul." He had subsequently some hard conflicts, but became an exemplary witness for even the "perfect love" that casts out fear.

He began to preach in 1768. He entered the itinerant ranks in 1769, and, after about twelve years of heroic labors

[1] Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. iii, p. 398.

and trials, died joyfully. He was mighty in prayer. One of his fellow-evangelists says that "he loved the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength," and adds: "He was truly meek and lowly in heart, and little, and mean, and vile in his own eyes. I found my mind amazingly united to him for the time we were together, like the soul of David to his beloved Jonathan. I loved him much for the mind of Christ I saw in him, and for his zeal for the Lord of Hosts." His death was a sublime scene. He bore his afflictions with great patience, frequently adoring God, and repeating the words: "He knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." When he perceived that he must die, he exhorted his wife to cast all her care upon the Lord, and encouraged her to believe that his grace was sufficient for her. He then prayed for her and his two children, earnestly entreating God to protect them in "this troublesome world, and to supply all their wants." He next prayed fervently for Wesley, "that the presence of the Lord might continue with him all his days, and crown him at last with eternal glory." He then remembered his three fellow-laborers on the circuit, "praying that the Redeemer would assist them in their great work, that he would forthwith bless the labors of all the preachers, and preserve them until they should join the Church triumphant and that his kingdom might spread unto the ends of the earth."

During the night he passed through one of those trials of mental agony which good men often experience under the depression of disease; but, praying fervently, he was delivered, and "seemed as if he were admitted into heaven, to converse with God and angels and saints." He suddenly awaked his wife, and said: "Thou hast been sleeping, but I have been in heaven. O what has the Lord discovered

to me this night! O the glory of God! the glory of God and heaven! The celestial city! the New Jerusalem! O the lovely beauty! the happiness of paradise! God is all love; he is nothing but love. O help me to praise him! O help me to praise him! I shall praise him forever! I shall praise him forever!" "And so," says his brother laborer, "Robert Wilkinson departed this life in peace, December 8, 1780."

He died on the market day of the town, and the news spread rapidly among the multitude, who were assembled from all the regions round about; "the people of God were remarkably blessed in hearing of his dying testimony; the worldly people and backsliders were cut to the heart." When the itinerant preached over his corpse, one hearer was converted, and "went from the solemn place as the shepherds from the heavenly vision, blessing and glorifying God." The Methodists bore him from the preacher's house to the grave, singing a hymn, as was their custom; "they sang," says the pious chronicler, "lustily and with a solemn spirit, for the Divine presence was with us all the way through, and in such manner as I never knew before at any funeral." As the words of the burial service, "Not to be sorry as men without hope," were read, his devoted wife, who had faithfully shared his ministerial trials, and was leaning on the arm of a friend at the grave, with her two young children by her side, bursting into tears of joy, spontaneously repeated the words; and as she exclaimed, "Sorry! No! no! Glory, and praise, and blessing be ascribed unto God for ever and ever!" a "remarkable power," says the record, "fell upon all who could hear her;" they were melted into tears, some of grief, others of joy, and from that time "the work of God began to revive in Grimsby; the country people caught the fire and carried it along into their little societies," and so good Robert Wilkinson triumphed in his grave as in his life.

Thomas Payne was another humble but successful laborer during these times. He died in the early part of 1783. A

simple but very curious narrative is his autobiography, written at Wesley's request, and inserted in the old Arminian Magazine,[2] presenting many strange adventures, and striking illustrations of the power of early religious impressions, inextinguishable through all the waywardness of subsequent life. He was the child of Baptist parents, who trained him devoutly, and he heartily thanked God through his life for a pious education, which laid the foundation for his final reformation. From his earliest recollection he had "felt the strivings of God's Spirit," and he "prayed much and desired to be truly religious when but ten years old." But in youth evil company led him astray; he deserted his employer, a leather dresser; was sent by his friends to London; enlisted in Burgoyne's dragoons, but was rejected as not being tall enough; entered the East India service, and was dispatched to Saint Helena. Those were bad times (1759) for England in all departments of life, but especially on shipboard, and young Payne was thrown into the very vortex of immorality. Drunkenness, profanity, and licentiousness prevailed all around him; but his conscience survived. When about to be attacked, in the Bay of Biscay, by a French frigate, he was troubled with the conviction that he was not fit to die. During a perilous storm he was alarmed by the same thought, and by the fearful fate of some of his drunken associates; one of them fell overboard and sank; a second fell from the mast to the deck, and his brains were dashed out; a third would have shared the same fate had he not caught to the clue-garling of the sail; the same man afterward fell into the sea, while uttering blasphemous language, and was lost. Terribly did Payne's conscience smite him at these times; but he says: "I thought all was decreed, and was easy again." On the island appalling results of vice stared him in the face. "Indeed," he writes, "we had men killed continually. Some, getting drunk, rolled down precipices; others fell into the sea. And I verily think half of the army, and half of the other inhabitants of the island,

[2] Arminian Magazine, 1781, p. 580.

did not live out half their days, which often gave me very serious thoughts of the uncertainty of human life."

These scenes, with some others which, as he describes them, were evidently natural accidents, distorted by his simple credulity and alarmed conscience, led him earnestly to desire religious guidance, but for a long time he could find none on the island. Year after year, when the storeship arrived from England, he inquired if any praying men were on board. At length one arrived who fortunately had been educated at Wesley's Foundry, probably by honest Silas Told; he found later another, and they three "resolved to serve God together." They met at night on a mountain-side to pray. Once, while on his knees with his companions at this place, Payne cried out, "with an uncommon ecstasy of joy and astonishment: 'O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed! I will sing and give praise!' Being divinely assisted, I believed," he continues, "with my heart unto righteousness; on which God shed abroad his love therein, and gave me the Spirit of adoption, crying, 'Abba, Father,' which Spirit witnessed with my spirit that I was a child of God. I then could not refrain from declaring what God had done for my soul. I cried out to those about me: 'Why cannot you praise God with me and for me? I am so filled with the love of God, methinks I am just ready to fly up to heaven with my very body.'"

Many now were his conflicts without and within; the latter for want of experienced religious counselors, for all he had, besides his two young companions, was a pious German book. His fellow-soldiers persecuted him, but stood in awe of his devout life. Some of them were strangely reclaimed by him. One, on parade, uttered terrible imprecations to provoke him. Immediately a horror fell upon the depraved man, and from that hour he had no rest, day or night, till he made an open confession to a magistrate that, seven years before, he had murdered a soldier, whose image followed him wherever he went. Upon this confession,

judicially repeated, he was condemned to die. When under sentence he sent for Payne, and begged him to converse and pray with him, which, with the permission of the authorities, he did till the day of the execution. The smitten soldier died with Christian hope, declaring: "This is the best day I ever saw. I am going to heaven to praise Christ to all eternity!"

Payne's good conduct secured him promotion and abundant income; he married, and in his prosperity began to slacken his religious strictness; but he found a copy of Wesley's Sermons, and some of William Law's books, which re-awakened his conscience. He had terrible struggles and fearful dreams, and resolved to go to England to hear sound preaching and get among living Christians. After spending some time there, his funds being exhausted, and failing of other employment, he again enlisted in a regiment of foot. He could not find three religious men among all his comrades, and forthwith began in good earnest to preach to them. Receiving a furlough, he went to his old home at Nailsworth, and "exhorted the people to turn to God!" He made similar visits to Cirencester and Stroud. When his regiment moved to Leeds the zealous Methodists of that town soon had him hard at work; he preached many times in the streets, and not a few people, who probably would not have been otherwise reached by the truth, were reclaimed from their sins. The preachers occasionally sent him out upon their circuits, and he had now become an itinerant in regimentals. He purchased his discharge from the army, sent to St. Helena for his family, and thenceforward warred a good warfare for Christ till he died. Wesley directed him first to London, that the experienced Methodists there might train him well; thence he was sent to Ireland, "to take off," he says, "my rough military edge, and to break me thoroughly to the work on the rough mountains of the North." He speaks of the damp, dirty, smoky cabins of Ulster as a good trial for him. "More and more sinners were converted to God" every time he went round his circuit. "I lie before

God," he wrote Wesley, "to be as clay in the hands of the potter; to be just what he would have me to be; as holy and as happy as my nature and state can bear. I believe it is my privilege to be all holy, in the very complexion of my soul, in all my tempers, thoughts, words, and actions."

Through about eleven years did this zealous man pursue his itinerant labors in various parts of the country. Prostrated at last by sickness, he felt that his work was done, and believed his death to be at hand. "His conversation was truly in heaven," says one of his fellow-laborers; "his exhortations and persuasions to all that came near him, to devote themselves entirely to God, were delivered in such a powerful manner as made deep impressions on every heart."

The day before his death Rankin called to see him. After some conversation concerning the goodness of God to him, the dying itinerant said: "You are going to preach. Tell the people, tell the societies, I die a witness of the truth I have preached to others. And I now solemnly declare I believe the doctrine taught by the Methodists; and that the discipline they enforce is, above all others, the best calculated to bring sinners to God, and to keep them close to him." About an hour before he departed, his wife, seeing him in agony, said: "My dear, you appear as if your heart were breaking." He replied: "Let it break! let it break! But it is hard work to die!" While a group of his brethren were on their knees, commending his soul to God, he fell asleep in Jesus. "Thus," says one of his companions, "departed this Christian hero, this valiant soldier of Christ, who counted not his life dear to him so he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received from the Lord." Such is a brief sketch of the singular history of Thomas Payne, one among many of the striking examples which early Methodism afforded of the power of religion over the hearts and lives of men in the most unfavorable circumstances. Wesley, referring to his death, says with his usual brevity, but more than usual emphasis: "Mr. Payne, who had been in the army for many years, was a plain, honest,

zealous man, fearing neither men nor devils. And as he bore down all opposers while he lived, so in death he triumphed over his last enemy, being more than conqueror through Him who had loved him."

Jacob Rowell died in 1783, worn out by ministerial labors. In the year 1747 Christopher Hopper, a mighty man of those days, went into the Dales, in the North of England, preaching in the market-places and on the highways. Allendale, the native place of Rowell, was noted for its ignorance and depravity,[3] and Hopper's appearance there provoked much opposition and general excitement. Rowell, going to a cock-fight, saw the crowd flocking around the preacher in the open air, and stopped, with his bag on his shoulder, to listen, when an arrow of truth pierced his heart. He became a praying man, and in 1748 began to exhort his neighbors in Allendale and Cornwood to "flee from the wrath to come." The moral state of the people of the beautiful district of Weardale attracted his sympathies, and, accompanied by a zealous friend, he went thither to preach to them. Before arriving they knelt down on the snow, and prayed that God would incline some one to receive them and open the way for their mission. At the first door that they approached they were welcomed; they were entertained several days, praying and preaching; they saw many of their hearers awakened; they repeated their visits, and soon formed the first Methodist society of the place, with about twenty members.

And now Rowell was instant in season and out of season, traveling the long chain of mountains which extends through Allendale, Weardale, and Teesdale, and sounding the alarm among their villages, until Wesley sent him to Ireland in 1751. Having thus entered the "regular itinerancy," he continued to labor with his might for thirty-four years. He was greatly useful on the Newcastle, Cornwall, Leeds, and Dales Circuits. The latter, so noted in the early records

[3] "Methodism in Former Days," by Anthony Steele. Wesleyan Magazine, 1843.

of Methodism, he formed himself, in 1757. There probably had not been, down to that date, any regular circuit between Leeds and Newcastle. Rowell was familiar with the ground as it was the scene of his first labors; and he soon comprised, in his long "round," Teesdale, Weardale, Allendale Lunedale, Arkindale, and Swaledale, and extended his travels to Hexham, North Tyne, and Alston. His modern successors in the North can estimate from this list of names what were the labors of their ministerial fathers. With his long travels and continual preaching he had also to endure frequent persecutions from "the illiterate, rude, and even brutal inhabitants of those parts," and was sometimes exposed to personal danger. On one occasion, when he was expected at Middleton, in Teesdale, a mob was raised and headed by some of the most influential persons in the place He was escorted through the town by two of his brethren who walked arm in arm with him. A rustic who had peculiar qualifications for such an undertaking, had been appointed by the rioters to begin the attack; watching his opportunity, as the preacher was crossing a small brook, he ran, and struck with all his force at Rowell's heels, intending to trip him up and prostrate him in the stream; but missing his aim, the mob beheld their champion sprawling on his back, in the water. This was enough, says the narrator; he received such a ducking as damped his courage and confounded his associates, who left Rowell to pursue his way uninjured.

He was a man of extraordinary natural eloquence, and so pathetic that he was long known among the Methodists as "the weeping prophet." Remarkable effects attended his sermons, and, in the dialect of the Dales, he bore the singular cognomen of *Fell 'em in th' heck*, in allusion to the fact that his powerful word often struck down listeners at the *heck* or door-porch of the chapels. When he left the circuit he had gathered into its societies more than four hundred persons. Like his patriarchal namesake, he is said to have been mighty in prayer, "wrestling" with God. He was unusually effect-

ive in awakening rude and hardened men. Wesley appointed him to preach at a Conference; his natural diffidence shrunk from the task, but no itinerant could disobey such an order without recreance to his office. Such was the power of his discourse that Wesley afterward exclaimed, "What have I been doing? What has my brother Charles been doing? This man will save more souls than both of us!" He traveled till he could no longer mount his horse, and then pursued his work in a small carriage given to him by his friends, until his infirmities compelled him to cease. "Jacob Rowell, a faithful old soldier, fairly worn out in his Master's work," wrote Wesley when he recorded his death.[4]

The year 1785 was rendered memorable in the annals of Methodism by the decease of two of its best and greatest men.

On the 9th of May the venerable Vincent Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, departed to his eternal rest by a death which all good men might envy. He was "entitled, on various accounts," says a Calvinistic Methodist authority, "to a conspicuous place among the brightest ornaments of the Christian Church in the last century."[5] Like his friend Fletcher, who was to meet him in heaven a few weeks later, he was of Swiss-French descent. Having graduated at Oxford, he served the parish of Sandwich, Kent, about nine years, and was then presented to the vicarage of Shoreham, where he continued "a bright and shining light" more than half a century.

In 1746 he became acquainted with Wesley, and ever afterward maintained the most intimate friendship and cooperation with him. He was Wesley's most confidential counselor. Charles Wesley called him the "Archbishop of Methodism." He welcomed the traveling evangelists into his own church, though his parishioners mobbed them. When Charles Wesley first appeared in his pulpit they

[4] Wesleyan Conferences, etc., vol. i, p. 168.

[5] Life and Times of the Countess of Huntington, vol. i, p. 387.

"roared, stamped, blasphemed, rang the bells, and turned the church into a bear garden."[6] Their hostility was subdued, however, and when John Wesley arrived, soon after, he preached without interruption, and for nearly forty years the vicarage was a frequent and endeared refuge to both the great leaders, and the Shoreham church virtually a Methodist chapel. Perronet published several works in defense of Methodism. He gave two sons to Wesley's Conference, one of whom, Charles Perronet, died in the itinerant ministry in 1776, after more than twenty years' faithful service.[7] The other, Edward Perronet, retired on account of his health, and his dissatisfaction with the adherence of the Conference to the national Church. He lived many years at Canterbury, where he always co-operated with the Methodists, receiving Wesley to his home, and aiding him and his preachers in their religious labors. He rented a large house in the ancient palace of the archbishop, near the cathedral, and opened its spacious hall for the ministrations of his Methodist friends.[8] The clergy of Canterbury, who were hostile alike to Perronet and Methodism, resented this bold invasion of their precincts, and "employed a mob of the baser sort," secretly engaging also forty soldiers from the barracks, to enter the house and break up the worship. The attack was successful. The pulpit was brought out and burned in the Butter Market, where Wesley had first preached in the town. Perronet afterward purchased and fitted up for the Methodists an old French church. He died in 1791, exclaiming, "Glory to God in the height of his Divinity! Glory to God in the depth of his humanity! Glory to God in his all-sufficiency; into his hands I commend my spirit!" He is known throughout

[6] Wesleyan Magazine, 1858, p. 484.

[7] See an account of his death in the Arminian Magazine for 1781, p. 529: "He was a living and a dying witness of the blessed doctrine he always defended—entire sanctification. God," he said, shortly before his death, "has purged me from all my dross; all is done away. I am all love!"

[8] "Methodism in Canterbury." Wesleyan Magazine, 1837, p. 420.

the English world by his grand hymn: "All hail the power of Jesus' name!"[9]

England, in those days, presented no household more consecrated than that of the Shoreham vicarage. It was sanctified by many and heart-touching sorrows. The wife of the vicar, and one after another of his numerous children, fell around him into the grave, but at each afflictive blow a new grace, and majesty even, seemed to settle on the religious character of the venerable man. All his family were members of the Methodist class at Shoreham, and all "died in the Lord." One of his sons, as has been related, received such an impression from the mere sight of Fletcher as led to his conversion.[10] Another died on the Continent while struggling to rescue the wrecks of the property of his ancestors; but he had been with Fletcher at his retreat for health in Switzerland, and was led by him to the saving knowledge of God before his homeward and fatal passage. Another was converted through the instrumentality of his brother Charles, and died in such triumph as filled the house with holy joy. The daughters were especially beloved and devoted. Wesley records, as we have seen, a remarkable revival of religion in Shoreham, produced by the labors of one of them. She had the charge of his family for some years, and was the companion and solace of his old age, but was snatched suddenly from him by death. The venerable man, when

[9] Evangelical Magazine, 1859. London.

[10] Contemporary books often speak of the peculiar impression produced by the appearance of this holy man. An example is recorded by a living Methodist preacher as occurring in his early travels in the remote wilds of Louisiana. On his circuit he found a settler who had been reproved by Fletcher at Madeley for profanity; he was "struck dumb" by the look of the vicar, and though he afterward went to sea, forgot the words of the rebuke, and was recklessly wicked, that look never escaped his mind. "It followed him everywhere, into whatever part of the world he went, and annoyed him in all his sins." On penetrating Louisiana, and hearing the Methodist itinerant fifty years later, the remembered "look" overpowered him. "No longer resisting the impression which had followed him the world over, he yielded, obtained pardon, lived holily, and soon after died in great peace." (Letter of Rev. D. Devinne to the author.)

he saw she had expired, stood up and worshiped God, exclaiming, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" "This," says the narrator, "was a scene never to be forgotten by those who were present."[11] The good vicar was left at last, with the snows of many winters upon his head, to be comforted by the care of two granddaughters; but one was crushed at his side by an affecting sorrow. We find in Wesley's Journal the only extant allusion to the sad scene.[12] A gentleman, so called, had, by the utmost assiduity and innumerable professions of the tenderest affection, gained her love by slow degrees. The time of the marriage was fixed, the ring was bought, and the wedding clothes were sent to her. He came, a week before the day, and continued to avow the most ardent regard, but at a later visit, sitting down very carelessly on a chair, he declared in the coolest manner that he had changed his purpose; that he had been mistaken, did not love her, and could not marry her. He walked away, leaving her dumb with grief. The sorrow which she endeavored to conceal preyed upon her spirits till, three or four days after, she suddenly laid down, and in four minutes died. "One of the ventricles of her heart burst, so she literally died of a broken heart." "When," adds Wesley, "old Mr. Perronet heard that his favorite child, the stay of his old age, was dead, he broke into praise and thanksgiving to God, who had 'taken another of his children out of this evil world.'" Frequent are Wesley's allusions to the afflictions of the consecrated parsonage, for he was incessantly turning aside to it, but not so much to give as to receive religious consolation.

A laborious itinerant of that day[13] records thankfully the comfort he received there from the patriarch, ninety years of age: "he has often expressed to me his thankfulness to the Almighty for safely landing his children in eternal

[11] Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 27. [12] Journal, Oct. 23, 1782.
[13] Memoir of Rev. Thomas Cooper, Wesleyan Magazine, 1835, p. 12.

glory, 'where,' he said, 'I shall shortly meet them to part no more!'" He cheered the itinerant with prophetic hopes, founded as well upon his views of prophecy as the Methodistic signs of the times, "that the Lord was about to accomplish great changes in the world;" that "the power of anti christ was about to be shaken to its foundation;" that "there would be an overflowing of light, and liberty, and love; and that the dispensation of the glorious Gospel would diffuse its enlivening beams to every part of the world." The prophecy has ever since been fulfilling. "I shall not then be here," he added, "but I shall be above, and from thence look down to see the glory of the Lord among mankind." He was at times so absorbed in God as not to be conscious of the presence of those who were around him, and with uplifted hands and eyes would repeat, "Glory, glory, glory be to God for ever and ever! Amen! Amen!"

"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and many a Christian household has found itself mercifully protected from the corruptions of prosperity, and its dearest ties safely transferred to the final home, by the incessant guardianship of the angel of death. The aged vicar saw most of his family swept away. After continuing his labors till he was eighty-five years old, he waited a few years more in meditation and prayer for his own departure. Wesley writes in his Journal, that on the 7th of May, 1785, "that venerable saint, Mr. Perronet, desired his grand-daughter, Miss Briggs, who attended him day and night, to go out into the garden and take a little air. He was reading, and hearing her read, the last three chapters of Isaiah. When she returned he was in a kind of ecstacy, the tears running down his cheeks, from a deep sense of the glorious things which were shortly to come to pass. He continued unspeakably happy that day, and on Sunday was, if possible, happier still. And indeed heaven seemed to be, as it were, opened to all that were round about him. When he was in bed she went into his room to see if anything was wanting; and as she stood at the foot of the bed he smiled and broke out,

'God bless thee, my dear child, and all that belong to thee! Yea, he will bless thee!' which he earnestly repeated many times, till she left the room. When she went in the next morning (Monday, 9th) his spirit had returned to God! So ended the holy and happy life of Vincent Perronet, in the ninety-second year of his age. I follow hard after him in years, being now in the eighty-second year of my age. O that I may follow him in holiness, and that my last end may be like his!" Charles Wesley laid him to rest in the grave, expecting soon to follow him. Perronet's love of Methodism was ardent to the end. He was not deterred by Charles Wesley's High Church prejudices from calling it, in his letters to him, "the Methodist *Church*." "I make no doubt," he wrote to the poet, "that Methodism, notwithstanding all the wiles of Satan, is designed by Divine Providence, to introduce the approaching Millennium."[14]

In a little more than three months (Aug. 14, 1785) his fellow-countryman and old friend, Fletcher, of Madeley, joined him in heaven. Down to the year 1781 Fletcher had remained unmarried, his home at the parsonage being superintended by a humble housekeeper on a scale of monastic severity, while his income from Switzerland and his vicarage, above his absolute wants, was given to religion and the poor. He now found a wife who verified the wise man's declaration that "whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord," and whose example, beautiful as his own with holiness, has been a blessing to the women of Methodism in all lands whither the English language has extended.

Mary Bosanquet has left us memoirs of herself, written with admirable simplicity and candor, and in a style superior to that of most of the early biographies of Methodism. She was born of wealthy parents in 1739. When between seven and eight years of age she would often "muse on that thought, What can it be to know my sins forgiven, and to have faith in Jesus?" The inquiry perplexed her dawning mind, but she was enabled to cry out with joy, "I do, I do

[14] Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 27.

rely on Jesus; yes, I do rely on Jesus, and God counts me righteous for what he hath done and suffered, and hath forgiven all my sins." She was surprised, she adds, that she could not find out this before. She had seized the profoundest and most distinctive idea of Christianity.

Her family moved in the circles of fashionable life, and she was led by them into the gayeties of Bath and London—to the ball-room and the opera—but her devout aspirations could not be quenched. A Methodist servant-maid was employed in the household; her conversations with a sister of Mary, overheard by the latter, confirmed her religious impressions, and were, in fine, instrumental in determining her subsequent life.

Her girlhood had charms, from her affectionate and elevated character, if not from her person,[15] and she had a suitor who, for his wealth and position, was encouraged by her parents, but whose fashionable habits she could not reconcile with her Scriptural views of religion. She became acquainted with some intelligent female Methodists of London, and was thenceforward resolute to forsake the follies which beset her condition in life. Walking in the garden of her father's country house at Epping Forest, she recalled their religious conversations. "The prospect of a life wholly devoted to God" now absorbed every other consideration. "Such a sweet sense of God,"[16] she says, "the greatness of his love, and willingness to save to the uttermost, remained on my mind, that if I but thought on the word holiness, or of the adorable name of Jesus, my heart seemed to take fire in an instant, and my desires were more intensely fixed on God than ever I had found them before."

Her natural temperament, while favorable to piety, was also liable to superstition; an almost clairvoyant nervous power seemed to belong to her constitution, and the early accounts of her relate marvels which still puzzle the reader;

[15] Her extant portrait is evidently little better than a caricature, poorly executed, and representing her plethoric and advanced in life.

[16] Life of Mary Fletcher, by Henry Moore, part i.

but her good sense and Christian modesty preserved her from dangerous delusions even at this early period of her life.

Her parents wished her to accompany them to Scarborough, hoping to dispel her religious disposition by its summer gayeties; but with filial affectionateness and Christian meekness she pleaded to be spared what she deemed so great a peril. She was left with her friends in London, where she now became acquainted with Sarah Ryan, a woman of remarkable character, and one of Wesley's most intelligent and interesting correspondents.[17] At her house Mary Bosanquet found the companionship her devout heart needed. A few of the most devoted members of the London society were frequently gathered there. "The more I saw of that family," she says, "the more I was convinced Christ had yet a pure Church below; and often, while in their company, I thought myself with the hundred and twenty that waited to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. Whenever I was from home this was the place of my residence, and truly I found it to be a little Bethel."

One day her father said to her: "There is a particular promise which I require of you; that is, that you will never, on any occasion, either now or hereafter, attempt to make your brothers what you call a Christian." "I answered," she writes, "looking to the Lord, I think, sir, I dare not consent to that." He replied, "Then you force me to put you out of my house." "Yes, sir," she answered, "according to your views of things, I acknowledge it; and if I may but have your approval, no situation will be disagreeable."

Having attained her majority, and possessing a small fortune in her own right, she removed, with the approval of her parents, to lodgings at some distance from her father's house, and, securing a maid-servant, lived there in religious peace, devoting her time to usefulness, and her income,

[17] See his nine letters to her, (Works, vol, vi;) and also her autobiography in the Arminian Magazine, 1779. She had charge, for some time, of the Kingswood school, as housekeeper. Wesley says: "I know not that any other person was ever so regarded both by my brother and me."

above her necessities, to a few poor widows whom she had for some time aided.[18]

"And now that thought, I am brought out of the world, I have nothing to do but to be holy, both in body and spirit, filled me," she says, "with consolation; thankfulness overflowed my heart; and such a spirit of peace and content flowed into my soul, that all about me seemed a little heaven. I had now daily more and more cause for praise. I was acquainted with many of the excellent of the earth, and my delight was in them. Yet I was not without my cross; for every time I went to see my dear parents, what I felt when, toward night, I rose up to go away, cannot well be imagined. Not that I wished to abide there; but there was something in bidding farewell to those under whose roof I had always lived, that used to affect me much, though I saw the wise and gracious hand of God in it all, and that he had by this means set me free for his own service."

Thenceforward her life was one of unostentatious but active devotion and benevolence. She entered fully into the labors of the London Methodist societies, and became a witness, through life and in death, for the doctrine of sanctification, as well as justification, by faith, as taught by Wesley. A house of her own at Laytonstone, her native place, becoming vacant, she removed thither with her friend, Sarah Ryan, in 1763, and converted it into a charity school for destitute orphans. It was also made a Methodist preaching-house, and in a fortnight a society of twenty-five members had been formed. The institution at Laytonstone became not only a refuge for orphan children and the poor, but a sanctuary to the devout, and a home for preachers. Wesley visited it in his journeys with delight. "I rode over to Laytonstone," he writes, December 12, 1765, "and found one truly Christian family." In 1767 he says: "O what a house of God is here! not only for decency and order, but for the life and power of religion. I am afraid there are very few such to be found in all the king's domin

[18] Methodist Magazine, 1817, p. 527. London.

ions." Its unavoidable trials—within, from incompatibilities of temper; and without, from misconstructions of its design and economy—were borne patiently by its benevolent proprietress, and managed skillfully by her able friend, whose experience at Kingswood was now of valuable service. Sarah Ryan, after much affliction, died a blessed death under its roof, in 1768; and other similar death scenes were recorded in its interesting history.[19]

The institution was now removed to Cross Hall, in Yorkshire, where a large farm was secured for it. Here also it became the center of active religious labors. Worshipers flocked to its meetings from a distance, so numerously that they could not be accommodated; and similar services were established by Miss Bosanquet in various parts of the county. Wesley visited Cross Hall, as he had Laytonstone, and says, (July 7, 1770,) "It is a pattern, and general blessing to the country."

She was now not only a band-leader and class-leader, but a public speaker in her numerous rustic assemblies. Her assistants at Laytonstone, Miss Crosby [20] and Miss Tripp,

[19] Wesley says, in his Journal, October 31, 1766, that he was suddenly called to Laytonstone to attend in death Margaret Lewen, "a pattern to all young women of fortune in England, a real Bible Christian. So she 'rested from her labors, and her works do follow her.'" Margaret Lewen was a wealthy young Methodist, who lived and died in the family. She left two thousand pounds to it; but Miss Bosanquet did not claim the legacy, for fear it should be ascribed to her management by the family of Miss Lewen. Her death was remarkable, with some sad but unexplained incidents; yet she departed in great triumph. "When I am dying," she said, "if I cannot speak, ask me any question, and if I mean yes, I will hold up my hand, for I would wish to praise God to the last." In the evening she seemed just departing; her hostess asked, "'Is glory open before you?' She lifted up her hands, pointing with one finger, and strove to speak, but we could only make out the word 'Glory;' the joy of her countenance was beyond all words, and in this posture she in one moment breathed her last."

[20] This devoted woman lived to an extreme age, an admirable example of "primitive Methodism." When nearly seventy years old she wrote: "My soul in general dwells in peace and love. I live by faith in Jesus, my precious Saviour, and find my last days are my best." "If I had strength, how I would praise the Lord!" she exclaimed as she expired, October 24, 1804, aged about seventy-five years.

followed her example in these labors, and with great usefulness. Her characteristic good sense and modesty secured her general respect, notwithstanding her extraordinary course. She and her associates followed strictly the advice of Wesley. He had recorded the example of his own mother, who held similar meetings at the Epworth Rectory, and had thereby filled the parish church. "I think the case rests here," he wrote; "in *your* having an extraordinary call. So I am persuaded has every one of our lay preachers; otherwise I could not countenance his preaching at all. It is plain to me, that the whole work of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of his providence; therefore, I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation.' Yet, in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions; at Corinth in particular."[21] The example would seem perilous; but under proper regulations it had assumed, in the "Society of Friends," even a graceful beauty, and was not productive of extravagances. St. Paul had prohibited women from public interference with Church affairs; but was his language to be literally and rigorously applied to cases like these? Do we not read of the prophetesses and deaconnesses of his times? Wesley wrote to these excellent ladies: "The difference between us and the Quakers in this respect is manifest. They flatly deny the rule itself, although it stands clear in the Bible. We allow the rule; only we believe it admits of some exceptions."

They did not intrude into pulpits; their discourses were usually exhortations, sometimes expositions of Holy Scripture. In later years Mary Fletcher had a seat elevated a step or two above the level of the floor, whence she addressed the people in the several chapels which she and her husband erected in the vicinity of Madeley.[22]

[21] See Wesley's Letters, Works, vol. vii, p. 30.

[22] Hodson's Funeral Sermon.

Her discourses are described as luminous and truly eloquent, displaying much good sense, and fraught with the riches of the Gospel;[23] and years later Wesley says: "Her words are as a fire, conveying both light and heat to the hearts of all that hear her." Her manner of speaking, he writes, is "smooth, easy, and natural, even when the sense is deep and strong."[24] She guarded with good sense against extravagance in her meetings. Speaking of one of them she says: "Some little touches of enthusiasm were beginning to creep in among us, which I thought the more dangerous, as the meeting now grows very numerous, members being added from all sides. Yet it was a great trial for me to have to reprove them: 1. Because many are much farther advanced in grace than I am. 2. I was deeply conscious it is one of the most delicate subjects in the world, and requires both much wisdom and much love to extinguish false fire, and yet to keep up the true. All the day I kept pleading before the Lord, mostly in these words of Solomon: 'Ah! Lord, how shall I, who am but a child, go in and out before this thy chosen people.'"[25]

Such was the woman whom Fletcher selected for his wife; "a woman," says Robert Southey, "perfectly suited to him in age, temper, piety, and talents."[26]

In November, 1781, they were married in Batley Church. Their nuptials presented a scene befitting the Apostolic Christians, or a world of unfallen inhabitants. It was in the truest sense a religious festival. About a year afterward Fletcher wrote to Charles Wesley, who knew the felicity of a happy marriage: "I thank you for your hint about exemplifying the love of Christ and his Church. I hope we

[23] Hodson's Funeral Sermon.

[24] Journal, March 9, 1787. For a very able review of the whole subject of female preaching, and many interesting examples of it in early Methodism, see the 'Promise of the Father," etc., by Mrs. Phœbe Palmer, (Boston: 1859) also Taft's Biographical Sketches of Holy Women. London: 1825.

[25] Moore's Life of Mary Fletcher, part iii.

[26] Life of Wesley, chap. 30.

do. I was afraid at first to say much of the matter, for new married people do not at first know each other; but having now lived fourteen months in my new state, I can tell you Providence has reserved a prize for me, and that my wife is far better to me than the Church to Christ; so that if the parallel fail, it will be on my side."

Fletcher and his wife were both more active than ever, in Christian usefulness, during the four years of their happy union. They opened new places of religious worship in Madeley, and among its neighboring hamlets. He erected a chapel and schoolhouse in Madeley Wood, in order to secure Methodist services in the parish, if any changes after his death should exclude them from its church;[27] and immediately subsequent to the origin of Sunday schools, he established them in the town, and quickly had three hundred children under instruction. Accompanied by his wife he preached in many places; and visited Dublin, where their labors left a lasting blessing to the Methodist societies. At Wesley's Conferences, as we shall have occasion to notice, Fletcher's counsels and saintly example harmonized discords, and were received by the assembled evangelists as those of a messenger from the heavenly world. Daily, as he approached the grave, he appeared to be nearer that world, and its serene light seemed to shine perpetually upon him. Few men have defined better the doctrine of Faith; and the remark may be soberly ventured, that perhaps no man has ever better exemplified the "life of faith" in his daily Christian walk. Faith in the atonement as the sole ground of spiritual life, and in the gift and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, as the great result of the atonement, was his habitual theme. The "dispensation of the Holy Ghost," as the prerogative of the Church, he dwelt upon in the pulpit and in conversation continually. He lived and died in the assurance that this prevalence of the Spirit was limited in the world, only because the faith of the Church, regarding it, was feeble, and that the "glorious wonder of a Pente-

[27] See vol. i, book iv, chap. 5.

costal Church" would yet be seen among men. Thus, full of divine life, he was of course full of charity. He shared Wesley's liberal views. "God forbid," he wrote, "that I should exclude from my brotherly affection, and occasional assistance, any true minister of Christ, because he casts the Gospel net among the Presbyterians, the Independents, the Quakers, or the Baptists! If they will not wish me good luck in the name of the Lord, I will do it to them. They may excommunicate me if their prejudices prompt them to it; they may build up a wall of partition between themselves and me; but in the strength of my God, whose love is as boundless as his immensity, I will leap over the wall."

His charities to the poor continued to exhaust his income to the last. His wife, equally liberal, assures us that if he could find a handful of small silver when he was going out to see the sick, he would express as much pleasure over it as a miser would in discovering a bag of hidden treasure. He was hardly able to relish his dinner if some sick neighbors had not a part of it. On Sundays he provided for numbers of people who came from a distance to attend his ministrations; and his house as well as his church was devoted to their convenience. Being called upon by a poor man, who feared God, but who was reduced to great difficulties, he took down all the pewter from the kitchen shelves, saying, "This will help you, and I can do without it; a wooden trencher will serve me just as well." During epidemic and contagious diseases, when others fled from the sick and dying, he flew to them, offering his services to watch with them by night as well as by day.

Benson, who knew him many years, says of him what Burnet said of Leighton: "I never saw him in any temper in which I would not have wished to be found at death." Wesley speaks of his perfect *courtesy;* "it directed his words, the tones of his voice, his looks, his whole attitude, his every motion."

This good and great man departed to his eternal rest not with peace merely, but with extraordinary triumph. He returned home from his parish duties, on a midsummer day, exhausted and feverish with a cold. On the ensuing Sunday, resisting, after two days' confinement, the admonitions of his friends, he went to his church; it was the last day of his ministrations there. Before he had read far in the service his countenance changed, he was seized with faintness, and could scarcely proceed. The congregation was alarmed and in tears; his wife pressed through the crowd, and entreated the dying man to desist; but he seemed to know it "was the last time," and persisted. The windows were opened, and afforded him relief; his sermon surprised his hearers by its more than usual pathos and power, and "an awful concern was awakened through the whole assembly." Descending from the pulpit, he walked up to the communion table, saying as he went, "I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim, before the mercy-seat." Several times did he sink exhausted on the sacramental table, while the congregation wept and sobbed aloud at the sight. Having struggled through a service of four hours' duration, he was supported, while uttering benedictions on the people, to his chamber, where he fell in a swoon, and never again went out till borne to the grave. For several days he suffered much, but with continual praise upon his lips. "God is love! Shout! shout aloud! I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth!" cried the sinking man. A visitor asked him if he thought God would not raise him up. "Raise me up in the resur—" he gasped. On the next Sunday a supplicatory hymn was sung for him in the church. A brother clergyman, who officiated on the occasion, says that there can be no description of the scene; the burst of sorrow that attended the supplication; the sadness and even consternation that prevailed through the village which had been consecrated so long by his holy life; the running to and fro of messengers with reports of his condition. "The members of every family sat together in silence

that day awaiting with trembling expectation the issue of every hour."[28]

The poor who came from a distance to attend the service, and who were usually entertained at his house, begged to see him once more. They were allowed to pass along the gallery, and to take, through the opened door of his chamber, their final look at his beloved face. He died that night. "I know thy soul," said his wife, as she bent over him, when he could no longer speak; "I know thy soul; but, for the sake of others, if Jesus be very present with thee, lift up thy right hand." Immediately it was raised. "If the prospects of glory sweetly open before thee, repeat the sign." He instantly raised it again, and in half a minute a second time. He then threw it up, as if he would reach the top of the bed. After this his hands moved no more. Breathing like a person in tranquil sleep, he died August 14, 1785, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. "Many exemplary men," said Wesley, "have I known, holy in heart and life, within fourscore years; but one equal to him I have not known; one so inwardly and outwardly devoted to God, so unblamable a character in every respect, I have not found either in Europe or America, nor do I expect to find another such on this side of eternity."[29]

Weeping and lamenting "thousands" bore the remains of Fletcher to the grave, singing on the way:

> "With heavenly weapons he has fought
> The battles of his Lord;
> Finish'd his course, and kept the faith,
> And gain'd the great reward."

Nearly twenty years after his death a Wesleyan itinerant, whose circuit included Madeley, wrote of Fletcher and his posthumous influence: "He, being dead, yet speaketh. He lives in the memory of hundreds, and his spirit and temper live in the people's hearts. Such a spirit of piety as pre-

[28] Gilpin's Biographical Notes, in Fletcher's Portrait of St. Paul.
[29] Wesley's Life of Fletcher, Works, vol. vi.

vailed for several miles in and about Madeley I had never before witnessed."[30]

On the 29th of March, 1788, another great light of Methodism went out, or rather sunk below the horizon, still throwing its rays high up on the sky, and brightening the prospect of even our times.

Charles Wesley had not his brother's legislative talent. His poetic nature suffered the melancholy, the morbid discontent usual to such genius. Had the leadership of Methodism early devolved upon him, by the death of his brother, as was at one time likely, it would probably have been either extinct to-day or hardly distinguishable as a special religious agency in the world. He opposed nearly every great measure of his brother which has contributed to its organic power and permanence. His character as a poet has already been repeatedly alluded to, and will hereafter be more fully considered. As a preacher he was more eloquent than his brother. He continued to labor till the last in Wesley's London and Bristol chapels, and when the infirmities of age rendered him unable to proceed through an entire sermon, he still clung to the pulpit, calling upon his congregations to sing while he rested through brief intermissions. To the last year of his life he maintained the Methodistic habit of ministering to the condemned of the prisons, as he had done at first in Oxford, visiting them in their cells and presenting their cases to his congregations for public prayers.[31] The last of his poetical publications, issued but three years before his death, was entitled, "Prayers for Condemned Malefactors." In a manuscript note to this pamphlet he wrote: "These prayers were answered Thursday, April 28, 1785, on nineteen malefactors, who all died penitent. Not unto me, O Lord! not unto me!"

The Castalian fount seemed to be opened in his very heart, and welled forth undiminished by age. Clothed in the midst of summer with his winter dress, says one of his London asso-

[30] Rev. Robert Crowther, 1803, in Wesleyan Mag., 1834, pp. 885, 886.
[31] Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 27.

ciates, he rode daily a small horse, gray with age, but which was often a Pegasus to him. If a subject for verse struck him when he mounted, he would expand it as he rode, and pencil it, in short-hand, on a card which was always carried for the purpose. Often, when he returned to the City Road parsonage, did he leave his pony in the garden, and enter crying out: "Pen and ink! pen and ink!" Supplied with these he would finish the composition before recognizing or saluting any one who might be present. But when the inspired task was done, no man could be more courteous. After the kindest salutations and inquiries, he usually "gave out a short hymn, and thus put all in mind of eternity." [32]

His last sickness was long, but was borne with "unshaken confidence in Christ, which kept his mind in perfect peace." He called his wife to his bedside, and requesting her to take a pen, dictated his last but sublime poetical utterance:

> "In age and feebleness extreme,
> Who shall a sinful worm redeem?
> Jesus, my only hope thou art,
> Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
> O could I catch a smile from thee,
> And drop into eternity!"

"For fifty years," says his biographer, "Christ, as the Redeemer of men, had been the subject of his effective ministry, and of his loftiest songs, and he may be said to have died with a hymn to Christ upon his lips." He was in the eightieth year of his age; his heart retained the warmth of youth, and his ecclesiastical prejudices were unchanged. He refused to be buried in his brother's tomb, among the now illustrious dead of City Road Chapel, because it was not "consecrated ground." Methodism owes so much to him, that it can well excuse the honest eccentricities of his genius. He was the first member of the "Holy Club" at Oxford; the first to receive the name of Methodist; the first of the two brothers who experienced regeneration; and the first to

[32] Moore's Life of Wesley, book viii, chapter 3.

administer the sacraments in Methodist societies apart from the Church.[33] Like his brother, he was short in stature; and when they both, assisted by Dr. Coke, administered the Eucharist at City Road Chapel, it was matter of remark that the three men who were exerting the largest religious influence of their day, were each so small in person, while so great in spirit. Charles Wesley was desultory in his habits, being exact only in the neatness of his handwriting and in keeping his accounts. He was abrupt in his manners, but without affectation; he was self-contradictory, but tenacious, in his opinions; a staunch Churchman, but the first, and for many years the chief man to conduct Methodist worship in Church hours, which he did to the last in the London chapels. He detested democracy, and satirized Fox and Burke alike with Wilkes and the lowest of liberal demagogues. He was a thorough scholar in classical and Biblical literature. Horace and Virgil were his most familiar classics; the Æneid he had largely in his memory, and would quote it volubly, as a check to his resentment, when under provocation. The termagant wife of John Wesley once shut him and his brother in a room beyond escape, and poured forth her complaints against them in a strain which could not be interrupted; the poet invoked the help of his Mantuan brother, and repeated the classic Latin so vehemently as to subdue the shrew and obtain his liberation. His friendships were ardent and inviolable. An air of sadness, deepening often into despondency, hung about him. He was the best hymnologist, one of the best preachers, and, with a few pardonable weaknesses, one of the best men of his age. Hundreds of thousands of dying Methodists have blessed his memory, as they have sung or gasped the lyrics in which he taught them to exult over death.[34]

[33] At the time that he and the Kingswood colliers were repulsed from the sacrament at the Bristol churches, he conducted his poor converts to their new school-house at Kingswood, and there consecrated the Eucharist for them, thus introducing, on his own responsibility, the practice of separate communion. Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 28.

[34] See note at the end of this chapter.

Such are some of the names which appear in the obituary of Methodism for this decade. The examples here given are historical, not only in their lives and characters, but in their deaths, for triumphant death-scenes had become a characteristic feature of Methodism. It taught its people that it was not only their privilege to live joyful lives in the Lord, maintaining daily the conscious forgiveness of sins, and even "entire sanctification"—the "victory which overcometh the world, even their faith"—but, as "the sting of death is sin," they were taught also that it was their Christian right, as saved from sin, to challenge death itself with the apostolic exultation, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Records of happy deaths had become a staple of the Methodist literature of the times, and have continued to be such to our day. The annual Minutes for more than a hundred years have recorded them as they have occurred in the ministry; thousands of instances are thus preserved, and it may literally be said of most of the preachers of Methodism, that more is known of their triumphant deaths than of their laborious lives. The journals and magazines of the denomination have no "department" more regularly filled, or more attractive to devout minds, than that of "Obituaries." The Arminian Magazine had been published for ten years; it became a repertory of such narratives, and it now recorded, from month to month, the deaths of the comparatively few of Wesley's earliest members, who were fast dropping around him; for twoscore years later its most numerous and most interesting obituaries were of those who had been gathered into the societies in his last years, and by the veteran lay preachers of his day. The old historic names of the ministry continually occur in them. While these memoirs give many important glimpses of early Methodist history, they show, above all, how well the Methodists of those times of struggle were taught to die. They are usually brief, and always simple and candid, recording dying trials, like those

of Thomas Walsh, as well as dying triumphs.[35] They speak of many a hard final combat, attributed always to the great Adversary rather than to disease; but the dying saint becomes almost invariably the victor. John Henry, says one of them, tried to say, "Thy will be done," but could not. His despondency deepened into despair, and he cried out in agony that he was lost, lost at last. But the enemy recoiled before the precious promises: "The Lord shall give thee the desire of thine heart upon thine enemy;" "The Lord will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" and he now joyfully proclaimed his deliverance from "the hellish oppressor," crying out: "Jesus! my God and my all! O how far did the enemy exact upon me, and the son of wickedness afflict me! O thou cruel enemy, Jesus will give me the desire of my heart upon thee! Now I know that my Redeemer liveth. Jesus, thou art my God! my life! my light! my joy!" "Thus," says one of his brethren, "he went on without bounds or measure, glorifying God for his deliverance, and expressing his astonishment at the delusions the devil had led him into; and at God's great goodness in saving him from the hand of the destroyer."

Some of these last scenes are surpassingly sublime. The severest agonies are borne with exultation; the lowliest hovels are made bright with the glory of heaven; the rupture of the tenderest ties is accepted with hymns of thanksgiving, by the dying and the living, as the brief though painful means of reunion in the abode of angels. The reader of the old Methodist publications is surprised at the frequency of accounts of deaths in the coal-mines, for Methodism had penetrated and sanctified many of these subterranean regions of England, as primitive Christianity had the Catacombs of Rome. Davy, next to Wesley among the benefactors of the wretched colliers, did not give them the safety lamp till long after the Methodist evangelists had borne into their dark caverns the lamp of Divine truth. Explosions were of frightful frequency, and Methodist workmen were often reported among the victims. Parting from their breth-

[35] See vol. i, book iv, chap. 1.

ren with hymns at the five o'clock morning sermon, they descended to their daily toils, and were sometimes borne home before night blasted by the fire-damp, but praising God and rejoicing as fallen heroes, borne off the field in the hour of victory. "If there be a good man among the Methodists it is John Patrick," said the people of Yorkshire, for he walked among his fellow-colliers not only in "the regeneration" but in "sanctification." An explosion in a mine "wrapped him in a sheet of flame." He was terribly burned from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, and was a shocking spectacle when taken out of the pit. Notwithstanding the flesh was dropping from him in pieces, yet, to the astonishment of the beholders, his first act was to fall upon his burned knees and adore God. Being brought home, as soon as he entered the house, and before he had spoken to either his wife or child, he again dropped upon his knees, and with eyes and heart uplifted, cried out, "Glory be to thy name! Thy will be done! thy will be done!" No martyr ever suffered at the stake such agonies as this humble Methodist endured; none ever suffered with greater triumph. We cannot be surprised when, after such a scene, the old record tells us that from the night of his funeral sermon a revival began in Mosbro, which resulted in the conversion of more than half a hundred of his neighbors. Pages of scarcely less sublime examples could be compiled from the early annals of Methodism. It was its mission to bless the poor; to remedy their physical wretchedness as much as possible, but above all to purify their inward life and to secure to them in death the "life eternal." It did both, to an extent which commanded the acknowledgement of candid observers. "It has been amazingly beneficial," wrote a clergyman of the Establishment, who had seen its effects upon the miners of Cornwall; "it has turned the wretched heathens in the Forest of Dean, and thousands of heathens as wretched in the collieries all over the kingdom, into sober, professed, and practical Christians; and I should be

happy to see my own parishioners all Methodists at this moment."[36] Such proofs of its beneficent power were visible enough, to unprejudiced observers, in the lives of its reclaimed people; but Methodists themselves could say, over their suffering and dying brethren, "Precious in the sight of the Lord" are their deaths also.

[36] Polwhele's Memoirs of Rev. John Whitaker, Rector of Ruan, Langhorne, p. 141.

NOTE.—Charles Wesley's excellent wife survived him thirty-four years, and died at the extreme age of ninety-four, in 1822. Among the many indiscretions of the biographers of Wilberforce, is a misrepresentation, from a private letter of that good man, to the purport that the Methodists neglected the widow and her children, and that they were dependent on an annuity which Wilberforce and two of his friends provided for her. Wesley secured to his brother, at his marriage, one hundred pounds per annum, and it was guaranteed to his widow. This was in addition to his salary in the London societies. After John Wesley's death the family, doubting, perhaps, the permanence of the Methodist Connection, proposed to take the principal of the annuity instead of the annual payment. "A request," says Jackson, (Life of Wesley, chap. 27,) "coming from such a quarter could not be denied." But instead of investing the money the family spent it. Mrs. Wesley meanwhile lived with her children, who were above want. The fact that the principal had been spent may have kept her, through delicacy, from consulting with her Methodist friends respecting her financial affairs; but when they ascertained that she had not retained the property, they immediately provided her another annuity, larger, it is supposed, than that procured by Wilberforce; they also secured annuities to her daughter and her sons Charles and Samuel. Jackson estimates that the family received at least fifty thousand dollars from the Methodists "in consideration of his incomparable hymns." The charge of Wilberforce's sons "is as unjust," he adds, "as it is unseemly." Once for all I must admonish the reader that it would be an endless task to correct the misrepresentations, of Wesley and Methodism, made by "Church" writers. If any apology may be desirable for the insertion of the above private and mistaken allusion of Wilberforce, by his sons, it may perhaps be found in the fact that they were young men with fervent expectations of the Church; if an apology should be demanded for the continuance of the misrepresentation, after its correction by the best Methodist authority, it may be found in the facts that one of these young authors has died a Papist, near Rome, and the other has become—the Bishop of Oxford.

CHAPTER X.

CONFERENCES FROM 1780 TO 1790.

The Conference of 1781 — First Conference "Cabinet" — Wesley and Fletcher — Session of 1782 — Birstal Chapel Case — First regular Irish Conference — Session of 1783 — Adam Clarke appears — His early Life — His Religious Experience — He goes to Kingswood School — Begins to itinerate — Samuel Drew the Metaphysical Shoemaker — Clarke's Learning and Character — Conference of 1784 — Deed of Declaration — Fletcher — Pilmoor and the elder and younger Hampson retire — Fletcher's Farewell — Melville Horne — Formation of the London Missionary Society — James Creighton — He itinerates — Becomes a Methodist — Matthias Joyce, a converted Papist — His early Adventures — He hears Wesley — Becomes a Methodist — Enters the Ministry — Conference of 1785 — Of 1786 — Relation of Methodism to the Church — William Bramwell — His Life and Character — Conference of 1787 — Ordinations for England — License of Methodist Chapels and Preachers — Richard Reece — Joseph Entwisle — Peard Dickinson — Conference of 1788 — Relation of Methodism to the Church — Session of 1789 — Dewsbury Chapel — The Session of 1790 — Condition of Methodism at the Time of Wesley's last Conference.

The thirty-eighth regular Conference began at Leeds, August 7, 1781. About seventy preachers were present, all expressly invited by Wesley;[1] 9 candidates were received on trial; 14 probationers were admitted to membership; 2 desisted from traveling; 2 had died since the preceding session; 178 received appointments, including the Wesleys and Fletcher,[2] the name of the latter appearing for the first time on the roll, probably for the reason that Wesley was now hoping to secure the Madeley vicar as his successor in the event of his own death.

Inverness ceased to be reported among the circuits, reducing their number to 63. The aggregate membership was 44,461; the increase 631, exclusive of America, which

[1] Wesley's Journal, Aug., 1781. [2] Minutes of Wes. Conf., vol. i, No. 38.

now reported 10,539 members, with an increase of 2,035, and 54 preachers, with an increase of 12.

The contributions to the Preachers' Fund and Kingswood School amounted to nearly £648; no collections for "Yearly Expenses" were reported.

At this session we have the first intimation of the Conference "cabinet," which has since become an essential fact in American Methodism. Wesley says: "I desired Mr. Fletcher, Dr. Coke, and four more of our brethren to meet every evening, that we might consult together on any difficulty that occurred."

No theological question seems to have come before the Conference. A few disciplinary resolutions were adopted; bankrupt members of the societies were required to pay "their whole debt," if ever able, and were to be expelled if they would not do so. No more married preachers were to be admitted as members of the Conference, except when there might be a deficiency of single candidates, as the expense of families could not readily be met. Preachers were to publish nothing without the corrections of Wesley, as doggerel hymns and other publications had brought "a great reproach" upon them. The profits of all publications were 'to go into the common stock."

This session, and especially the preaching of Wesley and Fletcher, excited great interest among the people of Leeds. Wesley was admitted to the Church pulpit; and allowed, with Fletcher, aided by other regular clergymen, to administer the Lord's Supper at its altar to many hundreds. Fletcher preached to two thousand people at five o'clock in the morning. "Never did I see a man," says one of the itinerants, "who looked more like what I suppose the ancient apostles to have been. I think I never heard a sermon to be compared with it."[3] Methodist Conferences had already become those great religious jubilees which they have ever since been in both England and America.

The session of 1782 began in London, on the 6th of

[3] Rev. Joseph Pescod, in Wesleyan Magazine, 1829, p. 528.

August; 15 candidates were received on trial; 13 probationers were admitted to membership; 6 ceased to travel; 2 had died; 183 received appointments. The circuits amounted to 66; the membership to 45,823; the increase to 1,362. The contributions to Kingswood School, the Preachers' Fund, and the "Yearly Expenses," amounted to £1,371.

The case of the trustees of the Birstal Church, already alluded to, was examined. As the trustees insisted on the choice of their own preachers, and as this course, if generally adopted, would be fatal to the "itineracy," to which so much of the energy and success of Methodism was attributed, Wesley firmly resisted it, and the Conference resolved to take up collections in all parts of the country for the erection of a new chapel in the town, rather than tolerate so perilous an example; a lesson worthy of historical commemoration. The trustees, convinced of their error, subsequently yielded, and the difficulty was loyally settled.

As most of the preachers who "desisted from traveling" did so from want of sufficient support for their growing families, the Conference enjoined the strictest attention to the financial regulations of the Connection. "One penny weekly, one shilling quarterly, is our original rule," they said. This simple rule has been the source of all the subsequent and unrivaled financial energy of Wesleyan Methodism.

The old custom of men and women sitting apart in the congregations, was ordered to be strictly maintained. All unnecessary conversation in the chapels, before or after public service, was forbidden. Early morning preaching was made obligatory upon the members of the Conference.

Wesley had occasionally held informal Conferences in Ireland; the present year he dispatched thither Dr. Coke, and the first regular Irish session was held under his presidency, as the representative of Wesley.[4] There were now in Ireland 15 circuits, 34 preachers, and 6,472 members. Down to 1813, when he sailed for India, Coke continued to visit the island, and to be the favorite presi-

[4] Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 3.

dent of its Conferences. The Minutes of the early sessions were not published separately from those of the English body.

On the 29th of July, 1783, the fortieth Conference began at Bristol; 11 candidates were received; 9 were admitted to membership; 3 ceased to travel; 6 had died; 191 received appointments. The circuits amounted to 69; the membership to 45,995; the increase was but 175. The contributions to the three funds amounted to more than £1,425.

It was ordered that no preaching-houses should be built during the year, except such as were already begun; for the zeal of the people had outstripped their discretion and means, and chapels were multiplying too fast. Coke was commissioned to travel through the Connection and see that the chapel deeds were rectified wherever defective, in order to secure the itinerancy before the decease of Wesley. The preachers suffered more than the people from the itineracy, but they valued it too highly to have it risked.

A distinguished name appears for the first time in the Minutes of this session. About the year 1777, John Brettell, a noted Methodist itinerant of that day, "tall, thin, of long, sleek hair, and a very serious countenance," penetrated to the parish of Agherton, in Coleraine, Ireland. A well educated but poor schoolmaster resided there, training his family to hard work, hard study, and poor fare, but to good morals. One of his sons, about seventeen years old, was remarkable for his happy temperament, and for his industry, never having lived, he said later in life, a day from his eighth year without doing something to earn his livelihood. He loved books to excess, but had been an unsuccessful student, being unable to master arithmetic, and having abandoned his Latin grammar in despair, till, one day, under the rebuke of his teacher and the jests of his fellow-students, his brain experienced a sudden shock, a reaction of his mortified feelings, and his memory was awakened and "his long sorrow turned into instant joy." Thenceforward he rapidly advanced in almost every branch of learning, until he became one of the few

"encyclopedic scholars" of his age, and his reputation spread wherever the English language was known.

When John Brettell preached in a barn at Burnside, in the parish of Agherton, this young man, Adam Clarke by name, went with other youths to hear him, and was deeply impressed by the discourse. The Methodist itinerants now frequented that region, preaching "first in one house and then in another, and spreading themselves over the country," as usual with them. Thomas Barber, an eminent evangelist, came into Coleraine, and the young man's parents went to hear him. "This is the doctrine of the Reformers; this is the true, unadulterated Christianity," exclaimed his mother; and the Methodist preachers ever afterward found a home in the humble cottage of the family. Thomas Barber led Adam Clarke to the saving knowledge of the truth. "Adam, do you think that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven your sins?" asked the faithful man. "No, sir; I have no evidence of this," the youth replied. He was directed to pray for it, and the passing word was "like a nail in a sure place." He accompanied his mother to a class-meeting, and soon was fervently seeking the spiritual life of which he heard its simple-minded members speak. He sought it through much mental anguish, but remarked, in advanced life, that the experience he then gained, by his long tribulation, was none of the least of his qualifications as a minister of the Gospel.

He has recorded this struggle himself.[5] One morning, in deep distress of mind, he went out to his work in the fields; he began, but could not proceed. He fell on his knees on the earth, and prayed, but seemed to be without ability to utter even a broken supplication. He arose, endeavored to work, but could not; even his physical strength appeared to have departed from him. He again

[5] Account of the Religious and Literary Life of Adam Clarke, LL.D. F.A.S., etc., by Rev. J. B. B. Clarke, A.M., vol. i, b. ii. See also Everett's Adam Clarke, vol. 1, (London, 1843;) Wesleyan Centenary Takings, (London, 1840;) and Etheredge's Life of Adam Clarke, (London, 1858.)

endeavored to pray, but the gate of heaven appeared barred against him; the thickest darkness settled on his soul. He fell flat on his face, and again attempted to pray, but still there was no answer; he arose, but was so weak that he could scarcely stand. His agonies were indescribable; he seemed to be forever separated from God. Death in any form, he assures us, he could have preferred to his present feelings, if that death could have put an end to them. No fear of hell, he says, produced these terrible conflicts. He had not God's approbation, and he felt that without a sense of his favor he could not live. Where to go, what to do, and what to say, he knew not; even the words of prayer at last failed. "O reader, lay these things to heart," adds the learned man, in the maturity of his life. "Here was a lad that had never been profligate, had been brought up in the fear of God, and who, for a considerable time, had been earnestly seeking His peace, apparently cut off from life and hope! This did not arise from any natural infirmity of his mind; none who knew him, in any period of his life, could suspect this; it was a sense of the displeasure of a holy God, for having sinned against him. He was then being prepared for that work to which he was afterward to be called; the struggle was great, that he himself might not easily turn again to folly, and thus bring condemnation on himself, and a reproach upon God's cause; and it was in all probability necessary that he should experience this deep anguish, that, feeling the bitterness of sin, he might warn others more earnestly, and might speak assuredly to the most despairing, of the power of Christ's sacrifice, and of the indwelling consolations of the Spirit of God. God appeared to have 'turned aside his ways, and pulled him to pieces; he had bent his bow, and made him a mark for his arrows; he was filled with bitterness, and made drunken as with wormwood; his soul was removed far off from peace, and he forgat prosperity.' Yet even here, though his stroke was heavier than his groaning, he could say, 'It is of the Lord's mercies that

I am not consumed.' Passing through this agony he felt strongly in his soul, 'Pray to Christ;' another word for 'Come to the Holiest through the blood of Jesus.' He looked up confidently to the Saviour of sinners, his agony subsided, his soul became calm; all guilt and condemnation were gone. He examined his conscience, and found it no longer a register of sins against God. He looked to heaven, and all was sunshine; he searched for his distress, but could not find it. He felt indescribably happy, but could not tell the cause; a change had taken place within him, of a nature wholly unknown before, and for which he had no name. He sat down upon the ridge where he had been working, full of ineffable delight. He felt a sudden transition from darkness to light, from guilt and oppressive fear to confidence and peace. He could now draw nigh to God with more confidence than he ever could to his earthly father; he had freedom of access, and he had freedom of speech. He was like a person who had got into a new world, where, although every object was strange, yet each was pleasing; and now he could magnify God for his creation, a thing he never could do before." Shortly afterward his friend Barber came to his father's house. When he departed, the young man accompanied him a little on his way. As they came in sight of the field that had witnessed the agonies of his heart, and the breaking of his chains, he told the preacher what had taken place. The man of God took off his hat, and, with tears flowing down his cheeks, gave thanks. "O Adam," he exclaimed, "I rejoice in this; I have been daily in expectation that God would shine upon your soul, and bless you with the adoption of his children." The youth stared at him, and said within himself, "He thinks surely that I am justified, that God has forgiven me my sins, that I am now his child. O, blessed be God, I believe, I feel I am justified, through the redemption that is in Jesus!" Now, he clearly saw the character of the change he had experienced, and it was only now that he could call it by its name. He felt that, "being justified by faith, he had peace with God,

through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he had received the atonement."

This change in his moral character stimulated his intellect; he applied with new diligence to study, especially to Biblical literature, natural philosophy, mathematics, and languages. He soon began to "exhort," and addressed his rustic neighbors sometimes in nine or ten villages a day. John Bredin, a preacher on the Londonderry circuit, perceiving the promise of the young Methodist, wrote to Wesley respecting him. Wesley invited him over to Kingswood School. He arrived at Bristol, and departed to Kingswood, with three half-pence in his pocket. While digging in the garden he found a half-guinea, and with it purchased a Hebrew grammar, by which, he says, he "laid the foundation of all his knowledge of the sacred writings in the Old Testament." Wesley met him at Kingswood. "Do you wish," asked the patriarch, "to devote yourself entirely to the work of God?" "Sir, I wish to do and be whatever God pleases," he replied. Wesley laid his hands on the young man's head, prayed a few minutes over him, and sent him to Bradford circuit. Clarke calls this his "ordination;"[6] he never wished any other.

He was now but twenty-two years old.[7] His work was hard, his circuit long, including thirty-three towns and villages, more than one for every day in the month; and the preachers were almost constantly on horseback, for Wesley trained his men as a wise captain would cavalry. Their rapid movements Clarke considered very advantageous for a young man who had not "much variety of texts or matter." He preached with zeal and success, and was eminently "popular," as much for his talents as his youth. At the present Conference he was admitted to membership without the customary probation, for Wesley discerned what manner of man he was. His second field of labor was the Norwich

[6] So he names it in the Contents to his Autobiography, book iii.

[7] The date of his birth is uncertain; but compare p. 147 of his biography (by his son) with p. 47, Am. ed.

circuit, on which he preached, in about eleven months, four hundred and fifty sermons, besides exhortations innumerable; beginning every day at five o'clock in the morning, and regularly visiting twenty-two towns and villages, through a route of two hundred and sixty miles, much of which had to be traveled on foot, with his saddle-bags on his back, as there was but one horse on the circuit for four preachers.

His next circuit was that of St. Austell, in Cornwall, where Methodism now had general sway, and where his talents found a befitting field. His popularity at once became universal; his congregations were continually crowded; he sometimes had to climb into the chapel by its windows, passing over the seats to the pulpit, and almost every week in the year he was compelled to preach in the open air to crowds which no chapel could accommodate. He held them spellbound by his word under pelting rains and on deep snow. A general revival prevailed on his circuit, and among the many additions which he made to the Methodist societies was that of Samuel Drew, the noted metaphysical author, who was then an apprentice on the shoemaker's bench, but who rose by his own exertions and his genius to a literary eminence which commanded for him an offer of a professorship in the London University. Drew's works on the "Immateriality and Immortality of the Soul," the "Identity and Resurrection of the Human Body," and the "Being and Attributes of God," though presenting more of ingenious subtlety than of logic, are surprising examples of intellectual power in a special direction, and have given him a wide-spread if not a permanent fame. He became a Methodist local preacher, a defender of Methodism in frequent publications, and Clarke, who was his steadfast friend and patron to the last, pronounced him "one of those prodigies of nature and grace which God rarely exhibits," as the links between mortal men and the inhabitants of higher worlds.

Clarke's great success on the St. Austell circuit rendered the year of his appointment there "an era in its his

tory,"[8] and also in his own, for henceforward he was one of the most commanding preachers of the Wesleyan pulpit—a pulpit which now presented more popular and effective talent than any other in the kingdom. He maintained his laborious studies, and continued for about half a century to be the most eminent scholar and one of the most effective laborers of Methodism. As in almost every condition of life, sufficient time can be commanded for as much study as the intellect can healthfully endure, the labors of the itinerant ministry were not found by him an insurmountable obstacle to his literary culture. His daily travels gave him daily solitude for his books, and his daily preaching was an invigorating exercise to his mind and body. Wesley himself studied more than most students, and did it on horseback; he says that by his rides he was "as much retired ten hours a day as if he were in a wilderness," and that few persons spent so many hours as he secluded from all company. Clarke admired and imitated him, and became skillful in the use of the Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldee, and Syriac versions of the Scriptures, and in most of the modern languages of Western Europe. He studied nearly every branch of literature and of physical science. He was honored with membership in the London Asiatic, Geological, and other learned societies. His knowledge was not only multifarious but accurate, though not profound; for his intelligence was more extensive than his intellect was powerful. He was a philosopher in the etymological sense of the word, but not in its received sense; for, though vast in his acquirements, he was deficient in the faculty which classifies knowledge and assimilates it into intellectual power. His Biblical Commentaries, an immense but diffuse mass of erudition, have been used throughout the Methodist world. They betray some eccentricities of opinion, if not a want of sound judgment; are original mostly in these eccentricities, and are now becoming obsolete in what was their chief value, their

[8] Life of Samuel Drew, by his eldest son, sect. 7. New York: 1835.

learning. His bibliographical works have been superseded in like manner. His Memoirs of the Wesley Family, and other biographical productions, are mostly valuable for their abundant facts, almost invariably accurate, though marked by his characteristic defects. His sermons, in three volumes, are good without being great. As a preacher he was pre-eminent for his simplicity and unction, and the expository instruction which his great learning enabled him to bring to the illustration of the sacred text. Though he studied his discourses thoroughly, he always preached extempore, and, after delivering five thousand sermons, he could not recall an instance in which he knew beforehand a single sentence that he should utter, for his memory could not retain words. He had a cordial heart, the courtesy of a perfect Christian gentleman, and was unwavering in his friendships. Character ized by frankness, piety, and generous aspirations, in his youth; by every noble trait of character in his manhood; and by a genial, hopeful, and sanctified old age, he was even more interesting as a man than as a scholar. He early became a leader among his brethren, and none of them exceeded him in zeal for Methodism or in catholic labors in the Christian philanthropies of his age. None, during his life, commanded larger congregations, or se cured larger collections for public charities, or was elevated an equal number of times to the presidency of the Connection.

Such is probably about the estimate which impartial history will hereafter give of this great and good man.

The forty-first Conference began in Leeds, on the 27th of July, 1784: 8 candidates were admitted on trial; 25 were received into membership; 5 located; 2 had died since the last session; 197 received appointments. The circuits amounted to 72, exclusive of the Isle of Jersey, and America, which are named in the appointments but not numbered with the circuits. The membership is reported at 64,207; but this estimate includes 14,988 in America; the increase, exclusive of America, was 3,274. The increase in America

was 1,248. The three Conference contributions amounted to £1,186.

The probation of candidates was prolonged to four years at this session; but its most important proceeding was its confirmation of Wesley's "Deed of Declaration." John Hampson, Sen., and his son John Hampson, Jr., with William Eels and Joseph Pilmoor, endeavored to form a party among the preachers against it; the apparent reason of their opposition being the fact that their names had not been inserted among the one hundred appointed by the Deed to be the legal Conference after Wesley's death. The debate in the session became violent and personal. Fletcher was there, and by his pious influence produced a temporary reconciliation. In the height of the dispute, his words were as oil poured on the troubled waters. "Never," says a young itinerant who was present, "never, while memory holds her seat, shall I forget with what ardor and earnestness Mr. Fletcher expostulated, even on his knees, both with Wesley and the preachers. To the former he said, 'My father! my father! they have offended, but they are your children.' To the latter he exclaimed: 'My brethren! my brethren! he is your father!' and then, portraying the work in which they were unitedly engaged, fell again on his knees, and with much fervor and devotion engaged in prayer. The Conference was bathed in tears; many sobbed aloud."[9]

It was hoped that the strife was thus finally ended, and Wesley recorded that "four of our brethren, after long debate, acknowledged their fault, and all that was past was forgotten."[10] But he was disappointed. The elder Hampson seceded soon after the session, and became a pastor among the Independents; but as he was aged and feeble, and his Church poor, the Conference generously allowed him a small annuity, during the eleven remaining years of his life; for Methodism, though always poor, has always been finan-

[9] Biography of Rev. Charles Atmore, by Rev. J. S. Stamp, in Wesleyan Magazine, 1845, p. 14.

[10] Journal, August 27, 1784, Works, vol. iv, p. 600.

cially generous. His son also deserted the Conference, and obtained ordination and a curacy in the Establishment; he wrote a life of Wesley, which was full of misrepresentations; but though written to please Churchmen, it could not obtain credit enough to enable it to survive its author. William Eels continued in the Conference three years longer, but never pardoned the omission of his name from the Deed of Declaration, and seized the opportunity of some new provocation to desert his brethren, and join the seces sion of John Atlay at Dewsbury. Joseph Pilmoor had labored successfully in America; he now returned thither, entered the Protestant Episcopal Church, and lived many years an estimable and venerated man. To the last he entained a strong sympathy with English if not American Methodism, and his correspondence with his old fellow-laborers, in England, shows that he was of too generous a temper to retain long his resentment against Wesley.[11]

Fletcher, whose devout spirit had converted the disputes of the session into a scene of prayer and tears, parted from them with an address which left them weeping, and sobbing at his adieus. Appealing to Wesley, he said: "I fear my successors will not be interested in the work of God, and my flock may suffer. I have done what I could. I have built a chapel in Madeley Wood; and I hope, sir, you will continue to supply it, and that Madeley may still be a part of the circuit. If you please, I should be glad to be put down in the 'Minutes' as a supernumerary." Wesley, it is said, "could not bear this," and shared the emotion which prevailed around him. He did not give him nominally a supernumerary relation to the Conference, for the next year his name is put down for Chester circuit, which included Madeley. Turning to the preachers, Fletcher admonished them to feed faithfully the sheep of his parish flock when he should be no more.[12] He was now fast

[11] An account of him will be given in the History of American Methodism.

[12] He built the chapel in Madeley Wood with his income from Switzerland, that the Methodists might have access to his people if, after his

declining in health; in about six weeks he wrote to Ireland, at Bristol: "O let us trim our lamps, gird our loins, and prepare to escape to the heavenly shore, as Paul did, when he saw the leaky ship ready to go to the bottom, and made himself ready to swim to the land. I keep in my sentry box till Providence remove me; my situation is quite suited to my little strength; I may do as much or as little as I please, according to my weakness; and I have an advantage which I can have nowhere else in such a degree; my little field of action is just at my door, so that if I happen to overdo myself, I have but a step from my pulpit to my bed, and from my bed to my grave."

After a few months more, he passed from his pulpit to his bed, and from his bed to his grave, we have seen how sublimely.

Among the candidates admitted on probation this year was Mellville Horne, whose name has already been mentioned as connected with the earliest missionary movements of the last century in England. He remained about three years in the itinerant ministry when he obtained orders in the Establishment, for both the Wesleyan and the Calvinistic Methodists encouraged the settlement of their preachers in the national Church, as a means of promoting its restoration to evangelical piety. Horne was made a chaplain at Sierra Leone; he preserved his Methodistic zeal, though not his Methodist orthodoxy, and, while a spectator of African heathenism, formed those views of Christian missions which he presented in his celebrated "Letters on Missions, addressed to the Protestant Ministers of the British Churches," and which have since given his name importance in the Christian world.[13]

He wielded a powerful pen, and his eloquent earnestness stirred all classes of devout men in England. He rebuked

death, the parish incumbent should be hostile to them. It was also used for a charity school, and in our day (1858) the Methodists have rebuilt it on a larger scale, and in a style of simple beauty, as a memorial of the good and great vicar.

[13] An American edition was issued in Boston in 1835.

with irresistible force the general neglect of foreign evangelization. "At the bar of Scripture and of conscience," he said, "fathers, brethren, ministers of Christ, in the presence of God I charge you, I charge myself, with betraying the grand interests of our Master by refusing to propagate his Gospel. I charge you with the habitual, open violation of Christ's command: 'Go, preach the Gospel to every creature.' Lastly, I charge you with doing this without shame, and almost without an effort to do the contrary. What moneys have we subscribed? What associations have we formed? What prayers have we offered up? What animated exhortations have we given to our flocks, and to one another, on the subject of missions?"

Though he had become a Churchman he retained his Methodistic catholicity. "It is not," he said, "Calvinism, it is not Arminianism, but Christianity that the missionary is to teach; it is not the hierarchy of the Church of England, it is not the principles of Protestant Dissenters, that he has in view to propagate; his object is to serve the Church universal." His eloquent appeal prompted the first counsels which led to the formation of the London Missionary Society, now so powerful an agent in the spread of Christianity throughout the world.[14] "I was struck," says one of its founders, "with shame and remorse, and powerfully stimulated to desire that some measure might be adopted to procure a simultaneous movement of British Christians in this honorable service."[15] Haweis, one of the chaplains and executors of the Countess of Huntingdon, read the "Letters" on a journey to Brighton. They kindled his soul, and he publicly offered five hundred pounds for the equipment of the first missionaries; he wished a "general union of all denominations," that a broad basis might be laid for the enterprise. Eyre, Matthew Wilks, Bogue, and others, united their prayers and counsels for the purpose; the Evangelical Magazine discussed it; and soon meetings were held in Lon-

[14] Ellis's Hist. of Lond. Miss. Society, vol. i, pp. 13–15. London: 1844.
[15] Memoir of Rev. John Townsend.

don to give it effect. Thus did the missionary spirit of Methodism begin to assume a form outside of the Wesleyan body, and its results are seen to-day on the outlines of nearly all the world. In the Wesleyan societies themselves the missionary movement had already commenced, as we shall hereafter see.

The name of Rev. James Creighton, A.B., also appears, for the first time, in the Minutes of this year. Like all the regular clergy who joined Wesley, he was received into full membership by the Conference without probation, and is placed with the Wesleys, Moore, Rankin, and others among the appointments for London. He was a native of Cavan, Ireland, a student at Dublin University, and ordained by the Bishop of Kilmore, who appointed him curate at his cathedral, with strict episcopal injunction to "say nothing about faith in his sermons," as that was considered Methodistical fanaticism. The study of the writings of Wesley and Fletcher led him to better views of religion. He had heard a Methodist itinerant in a barn near Callowhill, and from that day had no rest of conscience till he apprehended aright the doctrine of faith and found "peace in believing." While yet seeking for this clearer vision he suffered great distress of mind; he was without religious sympathy, having no counselor who could instruct him from a personal experience of the mysteries of the divine life. He wrote letters to his clerical friends, but they stood aloof from him, as though he "were infected with the plague." His parishioners deemed him mad. "So that I was indeed," he writes, "as a sparrow sitting alone upon the house-top."

It was not long before he was preaching in private houses within his own parish; the people began to be awakened from their moral torpor; conversions took place under his discourses, to the surprise of his hearers and himself; he extended his labors beyond his curacy, preached in barns, on ancient ruins, in old forts, in any place in which he could get access to the people. His fellow-clergymen now remonstrated against his course. "I never saw any fruits of my

labor till I became irregular," was his reply, and he went forward. Without any direct relations with the Methodists, he had actually become one himself, itinerating as vigorously as any of them, and combining his converts into societies for their mutual guidance. His brother was converted and became a class-leader to one of his little bands. The papists attacked him and sometimes attempted his life. Churchmen, and especially the clergy, were zealous against him, though he was filling their churches. At one place, he says, "when many began to be awakened I explained to them the nature of a society, and joined fourteen of them together the first night; to whom more and more joined almost every week, till after some time they were about fourscore. The greater part of these, in a little time, obtained remission of sins. Meantime the vicar of the parish sent for me, and threatened to complain to the bishop; adding, moreover, that if I, and those fellows who were itinerants, continued to go on thus the churches would soon be deserted. I replied, our preaching tended rather to bring men *into* the Church; that I must obey God rather than man, and therefore was determined to preach whenever and wherever it suited my convenience." Shortly after, many who had been Dissenters attended the hostile vicar's church, and received the sacrament from him. Creighton also sent two papists to him to read their recantation, as a proof that the alleged irregularities were bringing men into, not driving them out of the Church. But opposition now arose from another quarter. The papists were enraged at his success, and mobbed him. Some of them one night waylaid his brother in order to murder him; but having intelligence of it, he returned by another way and escaped them. "The work flourished more and more after this," says the Methodist curate, "and I trust many of them stand fast to this day." In fine, the moral state of the country and the Church was such that most awakened men, zealous to do immediate work for the reformation of the people, seized upon nearly the same means of doing it. The

practical spirit of Methodism, spreading almost everywhere in the United Kingdom, gave a singular uniformity, if not unity, to their labors and results. In 1781 and 1782 Creighton preached more or less in seven counties, and rode and walked about four thousand miles. It was against his natural inclination, he says; but in the condition of the country he could not do otherwise with a good conscience; and he assures us that he suffered more fatigues and hardships, contempt and mockeries, than he would ever have endured "for all that this world can afford." In 1783 Wesley wrote to him inviting him to London; after a second invitation he "consented to go in the strength of the Most High." He took affecting leave of his parishioners, who now, after nearly fourteen years of his pastoral care, were a reformed community. They wept aloud under his last sermon, so that his voice could scarcely be heard. "I trust," he says, "that some of them will remember that day, even to eternity." On his route he met, in Dublin, with Fletcher and his excellent wife, "both," he says, "shining lights, flaming with the love of God and love to all mankind." He thus, in the outset, had a good introduction to the best class of Methodists.

On arriving in London he entered zealously into the prosecution of Wesley's views, preaching in his chapels, especially at City Road, administering the sacrament to the Methodist societies, making excursions into the neighboring counties, and editing the Arminian Magazine. A presbyter of the Church of England, he assisted Wesley in the ordination of Dr. Coke for America; he shared also in most if not all the other ordinations among the Methodists. He was steadfast to Methodism till, in 1820, he departed to his eternal rest, in the eighty-third year of his age.[16]

Matthias Joyce was also admitted into full membership, in the Conference, the present year, without having been previously recorded as a candidate, but not without having been

[16] Memoirs of Several Wesleyan Preachers, edited by Rev. P. P. Sandford. New York: 1843.

well tested, by itinerant labors in Ireland, through the usual term of probation. He was an interesting example of the power of religion; a Papist, a fugitive, a vagabond, steeped in vice and ignorance, with barely a trace of the moral sense remaining; making incredible hairbreadth escapes from accidents and perils, which were the result of his habits, though he ascribed them to a particular and pertinacious malice of the devil, which he stoutly but humbly resented through his subsequent Christian life; for after a career of youthful self-abandonment he became as devout and pure as he had been corrupt, and lived, through thirty years of ministerial labor and self-sacrifice, an example of the highest teachings of the Gospel, "a man," said his brethren, recording his death, "of a remarkably loving and peaceable disposition, a wise, acceptable, and useful preacher, a brother whose memory is precious to all who knew him." Such an example is historically legitimate to our narrative, not merely on account of his long career of ministerial labors, but as an illustration of the power of Methodism over the worst class of men. He has narrated his singular "experience" in a letter to Wesley,[17] which is scarcely less interesting for its frank simplicity and quaintness than for its extraordinary revelations of character. The only instance of compunction, in early life, which he records, was for cursing his mother, with a terrible oath, after a well-deserved chastisement; but being a Papist, he appeased his conscience by recollecting that he had heard among the Romanists that a child cannot be charged with voluntary guilt before it is fully seven years old. With all his vices, however, he had the obstinacy, if not the virtue, to keep, through life, a covenant he made with a playmate in his tenth year, never again to use profane language. When fourteen years old he was apprenticed to a printer, "but ran," he says, "into greater excess of riot than before." His employer corrected him terribly, shivering at one time an oak staff upon his head; but such was his obstinacy that he "was sure

[17] Arminian Magazine, 1786, p. 182.

ne would not have submitted if he had fallen dead at his feet." Before he was fifteen years of age he came near murdering the child of his master with a pair of shears; when nineteen he ran away from his home with a fellow-servant, to enlist on board a man-of-war, and made an attempt to kill himself, which would have been successful had he not been thrown down by the bystanders and the knife wrenched from his hand. His father, when seventy years old, wept over him, entreating him to be faithful to his business, but he escaped, regardless of the tears and infirmities of the heart-broken old man. He crossed the channel, and, reaching Liverpool, wandered on foot with his fellow-fugitive to Birmingham. There he met a fellow-countryman who was returning to Ireland, and who induced him to retrace his steps. With threepence in the pocket of one, and fivepence in that of the other, they walked on their route, lodging with gipsies, wearied, hungry, and wretched. His companion begged on the way, or sung songs for bread; he himself was too proud, he says, to descend so low, but kept up his self-esteem at the expense of his stomach. When near Chester he sank under fatigue and hunger; on rising to enter the city, with swollen feet and sore joints, he had to get first upon one knee and then upon the other; "however, by degrees," he writes, "with excessive pain I got on my feet and crept forward." A poor man, struck with compassion at his pitiable plight, lodged and fed him, but could afford him no other relief. He sold his waistcoat for three shillings, by the help of a poor woman who washed his feet and his handkerchief, and wept at the tale of his forlorn adventures. Many a touching example does he give, though artlessly and without design, of such traits of generous humanity among the lowest people whom he encountered; proofs of purest tenderness in the rudest natures. He re-embarked at Liverpool, for Dublin, with tenpence in his pocket, the remnant of his three shillings. A furious storm overtook the vessel; an alarm spread among the passengers; some of them attempted to

pray, "while I, hardened wretch," he says, "was highly diverted." But at the height of the gale, when he expected the vessel to go to pieces, he too was terrified; he crept "on his knees into a dark corner, and uttered a few heartless petitions." His father paid his passage at Dublin, and rescued him from the captain, who had imprisoned him on board because of his inability to pay it. He returned his parent's kindness by quarreling with him, and was "fully determined to give him blow for blow." He now describes himself as growing worse and worse; in two weeks he was horsewhipped by his employer, and again endeavored to escape, but failed; he became a gambler, and attempted to murder the son of his master, whom he had seduced into that vice; he sank into drunkenness, and barely escaped death from a pleurisy occasioned by the habit, and on recovering forthwith flew again to the bottle. His master declared himself tired of beating him, and pronounced him utterly irreclaimable; "and well he might," says Joyce, "if there was no God, for it was beyond the power of man to turn the stream of my affections."

Such are some illustrations of the degradation, the moral ruin of Matthias Joyce, shocking to narrate, and yet affording hope perchance to many a heart-broken parent who may have despaired of his prodigal child. What could reclaim this reprobate youth? Could any inflictions of law, any conventional sentiments of honor, could even any of the ordinary formalities of public religion? Let Methodism glory in at least the humble honor of plucking such brands from the burning when everything else seemed ineffective for all over the United Kingdom could it point to such witnesses, renewed by its power, and sitting, clothed and in their right minds, at the feet of its laborious and persecuted teachers.

John Wesley came across the path of this wretched young man. Curiosity led him to go with the crowd to hear the famous preacher. He describes himself, as in such heathenish, not to call it papal darkness, that he could not under-

stand what even Wesley, in his simple speech, had to say, and he "went away as ignorant as he came." But there was something in the scene, something in the aspect of the venerable apostle, that touched his depraved heart. "As soon as I came home," he writes, "my heart clove to him; his hoary hairs and grave deportment commanded my respect, and gained my affections." One of those acts of simple tenderness toward children, which have been mentioned as characteristic of Wesley, added to the effect of his apostolic appearance, for there were some traces of common humanity still in this wreck of the human soul: "what endeared him still more to me," says Joyce, "was seeing him stoop down and kiss a little child that stood on the stairs." His curiosity, at least, was now awakened to hear the Methodists, and he frequented their chapels. In a few months he was on his knees on the stairs of the printing office, calling upon God in prayer. "The Lord God," he says, "appeared in terrible majesty and Mount Sinai seemed to be in a flame. His voice thundered from the dreadful mount, and spoke in terror to my inmost soul, which made me tremble exceedingly. The Holy Ghost showed me the spirituality of the law in such a manner that I saw and felt my inward parts were very wickedness. For some time I was quite dumb, and wondered that I was so great a monster. O what heart can conceive the exquisite distress of my soul at this moment! I groaned, being burdened with a deep sense of the wrath of God. I saw myself just on the brink of hell. I thought I was undone forever, and despaired of ever being saved."

A fellow-apprentice who had been his companion in vice, joined the Methodist society with him, and a few months later all the men employed by his master, together with their wives, joined it also. A prolonged and terrible self-conflict had the poor prodigal, "tossed about on billows of temptation, and distressed by heart-piercing convictions." He wandered in the fields, and got into secret places to "pour out his complaints before God." Utterly reckless before, he now became even morbidly scrupulous; he seized

on books, and when he met with one which treated of faith, searched it with as much eagerness as a man perishing through hunger would grasp at a piece of bread; for the doctrine of justification by faith, which now dawned upon his dark mind, offered him the only hope of escape from his enormous guilt. Watchfulness against temptation, prayerfulness, delicacy of conscience, all the tender sensibilities of the new-born Christian life, were now manifest in his reclaimed soul. He walked diffidently in his new faith, fearing to claim too much, sometimes doubting sadly, but "there came along an old professor from the country, who was very fond of encouraging those who were of a doubtful mind," and who, on first seeing the young convert, "took a liking to him." Their conversations were continually about divine truth, and especially about faith. "I believe," said the old Methodist, "you do not doubt that God is able to save you; but you do not believe he is willing." As soon as he uttered these words, "the power of God," writes Joyce, "rested upon me in a remarkable manner; all my doubts and fears vanished, and I was filled with faith and love. I could now no longer contain, but immediately cried out, 'O yes, I believe he is willing to save me! and I see so much love in his heart toward me, that I should be the most ungrateful wretch in the world if I doubted of his love any longer.'"

It is well that such a personal history should be related with this particularity; for this is Methodism; this is Christianity; this "the regeneration." It is both the illustration and the lesson of Methodism.

He applied himself now to study; he read late at night, and was at his books by five in the morning. His fastings and self-denials became excessive, and for a time proved injurious; but his developing mind soon corrected these errors. Fletcher's treatise on Christian Perfection, in his Last Check to Antinomianism, led him into the "deep things of God," and he lived and died a witness of them.

In about ten years after the degraded papist first

heard John Wesley in Dublin, a letter came from the latter directing him to forsake all, and go to preach the Gospel on Limerick circuit, for he had already a good reputation as a local preacher. He procured a horse, and went on his way rejoicing, yet fearing. Not a few sore trials did he now encounter. As he entered Cashel, the first town on his circuit, one of those spiteful tricks of the great "adversary," as he deemed them, gave him a bad augury; his horse tripped, and threw him forward in the mud on the street; a notorious drunkard, passing at the moment, generously helped him up, and learning his errand, led him to a Methodist family; but, bruised, covered with dirt, and with a well-known tippler for a companion, the family were disposed to repel him as a drunkard himself, before the necessary explanation could be made. "Satan," says the good man, "was angry with me, but the God of my life overruled his malice." Often did his modesty, a virtue he had never known before he became a Christian, embarrass him in his new office, and at one time he actually turned his horse homeward with a sinking heart, resolved to preach no more; but a Methodist providentially met him on the way and deterred him, and his pious wife, though left alone at a distance, and suffering much from his absence, wrote him a letter worthy of her. "Are you afraid of the devil, who is himself held in chains by your Master?" she asked; "Is not God on your side? Then fear not. This temptation is for the trial of your faith. The Lord will make your cup to overflow after it, and bless you in his own way." He returned to his circuit. Two years later he wrote to Wesley: "When riding in the midst of my pain, which was often beyond expression, I have been constrained to cry, 'O the honor of being an embassador for Christ!' So many precious smiles of his face have rested upon me, while traveling round my circuit, that every cross was light, every rough way smooth, and every crooked place straight."

And so Matthias Joyce took his honorable place, the present year, in the Conference; and, always afterward war

ring a good warfare, lived to be venerated as a veteran in the ministry, and died lamented by his fellow-laborers; "died," they tell us, "an Israelite in whom was no guile."

The Conference for 1785 began in London, July 26: 20 candidates were received on trial; 4 probationers were admitted to membership; 8 located; one had died since the last session; 211 received appointments, among whom is named Freeborn Garrettson, whose field was Nova Scotia; a man of conspicuous importance in our narrative hereafter.

The circuits amounted to 79, including Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Antigua. The membership was reported at 52,431 in Great Britain and Ireland; 300 in Nova Scotia; and 1,100 blacks and 8 whites in Antigua; the aggregate being 53,839; the increase in England and Ireland, 3,264.

The contributions to the three Conference funds amounted to £2,021.

About seventy preachers attended this session, all of them by particular invitation from Wesley.[18] Perfect harmony prevailed in their deliberations. John Pawson, Thomas Hanby, and Joseph Taylor were ordained by Wesley to administer the sacraments in Scotland. One of the reasons assigned for this measure was "the absolute necessity of the case, as the Scotch ministers had repeatedly refused to give the Methodists the sacraments, unless they would leave the societies."[19] To counteract the misrepresentations of disaffected preachers, respecting the Deed of Declaration, papers were signed by all the attending members, approving that document, and declaring that Wesley had provided it at the unanimous request of a previous Conference.

On the 25th of July, 1786, began in Bristol the forty-third Conference. About eighty preachers were present; three sessions were held each day, beginning at six o'clock in the morning; 39 candidates were received on probation; 6 pro-

[18] Wesley's Journal, July, 1785, Works, vol. IV.

[19] Myles's Chron. Hist. of the Methodists, chap. 7.

bationers were admitted to membership; 7 ceased to travel; 2 had died since the preceding session; 238 received appointments.

The circuits now amounted to 88, including Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Antigua.

The membership was reported at 58,150 in Great Britain and Ireland; 2,179 in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Antigua; the aggregate being 60,329. The increase in Great Britain and Ireland was 5,719. The Minutes give, though erroneously, the membership in America at 19,271; it amounted to 20,681;[20] and the aggregate membership was 81,010. The Conference collections amounted to £1,968.

The relation of the Methodists to the Church was discussed at this session; "we all," says Wesley, "determined to remain therein, without one dissenting voice."[21]

He appended to the Minutes, however, a statement justificatory of his "irregularities." "I have," he concedes, "in some respects varied, though not from the doctrines, yet from the discipline of the Church, although not willingly, yet by constraint." Field-preaching, the formation of societies, and his own administration of the sacraments to them from the beginning, his annual Conferences, his ordinations for America and for Scotland, are referred to as alleged examples. "These," he says, "are the steps which, not of choice, but of necessity, I have slowly and deliberately taken. If any one is pleased to call this separating from the Church he may, but the law of England does not call it so; nor can any one be properly said so to do, unless, out of conscience, he refuses to join in the service and partake of the sacraments administered therein." He still wished, then, to maintain his adherence to the Church, so far as he could without sacrificing his obvious duty. As the latter was paramount with him, he committed these acknowledged irregularities, and was now prepared to go even farther, for he adds to the Minutes of this year a concession which he

[20] Minutes of M. E. Church, (1786,) vol. i. New York: 1840.
[21] Journal, July, 1786, Works, vol. iv.

had never before allowed—permission to hold "service in Methodist chapels during church hours" in places where the clergy were notoriously wicked, or dangerously heretical; as also where there were not churches enough in the town to accommodate half the people; and lastly, where there was no church within two or three miles. Evidently he foresaw the coming virtual separation of his people from the Establishment, and was wisely disposed to make what gradual preparation for it might be necessary, while he nevertheless postponed it as long as he could. He admits that "undoubtedly" there may be such a separation "after his death, but," he adds, "what I said at our first Conference, above forty years ago, I say still: I dare not omit doing what good I can while I live, for fear of evils that may follow when I am dead." He believed that the Methodist movement was a providential fact; that his connection with it was a providential responsibility; that it was not his duty to set off his Churchmanship against the necessities of the movement as they were providentially thrust upon him, and that the Providence which required his irregularities would take care of their results. If in this policy he proved not his English Churchmanship, he proved his English common sense, and, above all, his integrity to his conscience.

He again enjoined upon his preachers to maintain the early morning service, "at least in all large towns;" "to see that none sing too slow, that the women sing their parts, and to exhort all to sing, all to stand at singing and to kneel at prayers."

Among the nearly forty preachers received on trial at this session was William Bramwell, whose memoirs have rendered his name familiar throughout the Methodist world. His early education was limited to the advantages afforded by the village school of Elswich, Lancashire, where he was born in 1759. His parents trained him to religious habits, and from his childhood he was inclined to piety. He was apprenticed to a currier at Preston, where his exemplary life secured him general respect, but could not satisfy the

demands of his conscience. He sought relief by austerities which only exasperated his sufferings; he would bow for hours, with his knees bare, on sand which he spread on the floor, confessing his sins and repeating his prayers. He spent his holidays meditating in the solitude of woods; he fasted, and watched, and took lonely walks throughout the night. After protracted struggles he received better views of faith, while partaking of the Lord's Supper at the church of Preston.

Hitherto he had known little about the Methodists; he distrusted their teachings, but was led by one of them to hear an itinerant preacher, who addressed a congregation of twelve persons. Probably the evangelist desponded at the small prospect of usefulness in such an audience, but he was not aware that there sat in the little group a youth who was to lead thousands into the Church and into heaven. At the next meeting Bramwell joined the society. But he was not yet assured of his acceptance with God. Wesley passed through Preston. "Dear brother," said the patriarch, as he took the hand of the young disciple, "can you praise God?" "No, sir," was his reply. "Well, perhaps you can to-night," rejoined Wesley, lifting his hands and smiling upon the doubting youth. That night, while the service was proceeding, the light of God's countenance was lifted upon him, and he never again lost it. His parents, though devout in their way, were hostile to the Methodists, and entreated him to flee from the fanatics. It was expected that they would establish him in business, for they possessed some property; they now threatened to withhold all assistance from him, but they could not shake his resolution.

He was soon active in religious labors; he conducted prayer meetings at five o'clock in the morning, for the accommodation of working people; he became a class leader, and by his instrumentality such a religious interest was excited in Preston that the Methodist society was quickly doubled. Wesley found, at his next visit to the town, a large preaching-house fitted up, and "the old prejudice

quite forgotten." He could appreciate such a man as Bram well, and the faithful laborer was called into the itinerant service. Before he went, however, he became deeply interested in the doctrine of Methodism respecting sanctification, a subject which was to be the chief theme of his ministry; he was convinced, he says, of his necessity of entire purity, and sought it carefully with tears, and prayers, and self-sacrifice, yet found it not; for he sought it not by "faith," but by "the works of the law." While sitting alone in the house of a friend, meditating and praying, "heaven," he says, "came down to earth; it came to my soul. The Lord, for whom I had waited, came suddenly to the temple of my heart, and I had an immediate evidence that this was the blessing I had for some time been seeking. My soul was then all wonder, love, and praise." About twenty-six years later he writes: "I have walked in this liberty ever since. Glory be to God! I have been kept by his power. I stand by faith." The records of Methodism are crowded with examples of saintly living; but from among them all, no instance of profounder piety can be cited than that of William Bramwell.

Thus furnished for every good word and work, he entered upon his travels as a preacher in 1785, and in the present year was received by the Conference. For more than thirty years he was one of the most successful preachers of English Methodism. He was a "revivalist" in the best sense of the term. His energy was tireless, his understanding mas culine, his decision of character unswerving, his voice sin gularly musical, his command over the passions of his hearers absolute.[22]

He was nearly six feet high, and robust; his features were large, strong, and dark, like those of a bronze statue, and his eye "piercing as an eagle's." He was ascetic; an early riser for study and prayer; reading some, studying more, and praying most. He acquired a knowledge of the Greek Scriptures, was conversant with the French language, and

[22] Wesleyan Centenary Takings, p. 42.

translated a good work from it on preaching. He was scrupulous to a fault, and charitable to excess, giving even the clothes from his person to the poor. The quickness and clearness of his discriminations of character were marvelous, and led both himself and his friends to suppose that he possessed the power of "discerning spirits." Few men could tell an illustrative anecdote in the pulpit with greater effect; few had such mighty prevalence in prayer; few such control over public assemblies, especially in scenes of religious excitement, repressing excesses, awing opposers, directing the methods of labor, and constraining all things according to his own will. Few men, perhaps no man of his day, gathered more converts into the communion of Methodism.[23]

The Conference for 1787 began on the 31st of July at Manchester. A great increase was shown in most of the statistics of the body; 32 candidates were received on trial; 5 probationers were admitted to membership; 5 members had died since the last session; 261 received appointments; the number of circuits recorded was 100. The collections amounted to £2,233.

The membership reported was 64,980; the increase being 4,651; the membership in the United States was 25,842; the increase, 5,161. The aggregate membership amounted to 90,822; the aggregate increase to 9,812.

Anthems were now prohibited in the chapels, because they did not admit of joint worship, for Methodism always insisted on congregational singing. It was decided that no preachers should be sent to circuits which would not provide for their support, except in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and a few feeble appointments in England. Wesley, assisted by two presbyters of the Church of England, ordained at this session Alexander Mather, Thomas Rankin, and Henry Moore, and subsequently ordained Mather as a superintendent or bishop. Hitherto his ordinations had been for America and Scotland; he had hesitated to ordain men for England; but the late rapid growth of Methodism, the mul-

[23] See Memoirs of Rev. William Bramwell, by Rev. Thomas Harris.

tiplication of chapels in all parts of the land, with a ministerial force of more than two hundred and fifty traveling preachers, increased the demand of the people for the sacraments from their own pastors. His own death seemed at hand, and it devolved upon him to provide for the uncertain future. The time had come therefore for another step forward, and these men *were ordained for England.* He earnestly advised them, however, that, in accordance with his own example, they should "continue united to the Established Church," but, only "so far as the work in which they were engaged would permit."[24] The reordination of Mather as a bishop, was significant; he was a man of commanding sense, courage, and dignity, and Wesley evidently believed that while he could be trusted to use his extraordinary powers with wisdom, he would not hesitate to use them also with the energy which any future emergency might require.

Another measure was also now found necessary, which, if it did not amount to an actual separation from the Establishment, was too equivocal to admit of legal definition. Legal consultation had convinced Wesley that his preachers and chapels were not safe from the penalties of the barbarous Conventicle Act, unless they should be licensed, under the statutes provided for the protection of persons "dissenting from the Church of England."[25] He therefore adopted measures for their security by having most of them licensed[26] though not "professedly as Dissenters, but as simply preachers of the Gospel."

Thus was Methodism led on, step after step, in its own providential route, in spite of all the personal sympathies

[24] Myles's Chronological History, chap. 7.

[25] Act of Toleration; first of William and Mary, and nineteenth of George III.

[26] The form of petition or "certificate" by which the license was obtained, expressly claimed it by "virtue of the statute for exempting Protestant subjects, *dissenting from the Church of England*, from the penalties of certain laws." See Myles's Chron. Hist. chap. 7. See also Wesley's Journal, Nov. 3, 1787; and Moore's Life of Wesley, book viii, chap 4.

or prejudices of its founder for the national Establishment. But its claim for shelter under the Act of Toleration was too ambiguous to protect it from severe persecutions in Somersetshire and elsewhere. Some magistrates and bishops refused to license its preachers and chapels, if its people scrupled not to receive the sacraments at the Church. Poor members of the societies were fined twenty pounds each, and their goods distrained to pay the fine, for holding meetings in their own houses. Wesley remonstrated in the most eloquent and affecting letters that he ever wrote, with two of the prelates who were responsible for these persecutions,[27] and they soon ceased. He had himself become the evangelical Primate of the realm, and his cause was now too formidable for such opposition, though his ambiguous relation to the Church challenged it.

Among the names subsequently distinguished in the history of Methodism, but which now appeared for the first time in the Minutes, are those of Richard Reece, Joseph Entwistle, and Peard Dickinson.

For many years Richard Reece moved among the societies, venerated as a patriarch. He was active in the itineracy fifty-nine years; he became the oldest effective Methodist preacher in the world; he took a supernumerary relation to the Conference as late as 1846, and died in peace in 1850, in his eighty-fifth year.[28] The last entry in his journal, on removing from London, a short time before his death, reads: "One more remove remains —to 'the house appointed for all living.' My hope is joyous, glory to Christ." His last words were: "Pardon—accept—heal—complete. He pardons—accepts—accepts."

[27] Moore's Life of Wesley, book viii, chap. 4.

[28] "Mr. Reece traveled, without interruption, for a longer period than any other Methodist preacher—no less than fifty-nine years. Those who came nearest to him in the duration of their itinerant labors were Thomas Taylor, of the British Conference, and George Pickering, of the New England Conference, each of whom completed fifty six years. The next longest is Richard Waddy, of the British Conference, who was an effective preacher fifty-three years." Sketches of Wesleyan Preachers, by Robert A. West. New York: 1848. See also Wes. Mag., 1850, p. 652.

He was a good, if not a great preacher, and a most amiable man. He is still generally remembered, by both English and American Methodists, for his perfect courtesy and his venerable appearance. His person was tall, his complexion ruddy, his head silvered with age, his voice commanding, his language flowing and pertinent, his piety tranquil, and his wisdom in counsel always reliable. He lived to share in the centenary celebration of Methodism, and by proposing that it should be signalized in England by the contribution of a million of dollars for its public charities, excited the suspicion that his usual good judgment had suffered from the effect of age; but the people justified his calculation by giving seventy-five thousand dollars more. He was honored with an election to the presidency of the Conference, and was, with his colleague, John Hannah, the first of those representatives of English Methodism, in the General Conference of American Methodism, which have maintained the formal intercourse of the two bodies.

Joseph Entwisle was a worthy contemporary and companion of Richard Reece. Devout from his youth, naturally genial, and with scarcely a noticeable defect of character, unless it were the enviable one of an excess of charity; highly evangelical as a preacher; as a counselor a peacemaker, both by his good sense and his good temper, he lived, like Reece, to be one of the venerated elders in the gates of the Methodist Israel. Beginning his itinerant ministrations this year,[29] he immediately became popular as the "boy preacher," and continued to labor until 1841, when he departed, by a serene death, to his eternal reward, a veteran of seventy-five years, during sixty of which the light of the divine countenance shone around him like a halo. Fifty-four years he was a faithful and, most of the time, a prom-

[29] There is some confusion in the insertions of his name in the old Minutes. It appears by mistake in 1784 as William Entwisle; being then but seventeen years old, he was induced to delay his ministerial travels. It appears again in 1785, but he did not take an appointment till 1787.

inent preacher. He was twice elected president of the Conference. He survived most of his first ministerial brethren, and at the Conference of the year in which he died, found present, among five hundred preachers, but one besides himself who had attended the session of the present year, and that one was his fellow-patriarch and friend, Richard Reece. "Since that time," he wrote, "many hundreds of our brethren have departed this life; but, blessed be God! there is a succession of faithful men raised up. *My* world is dead, and *my* course will soon end." He went home to die, and in about three months was with his old fellow-laborers in heaven.[30]

Peard Dickinson, a presbyter of the Church of England, appears this year in the list of appointments for London, without the usual probation. He was born in 1758, in Devonshire, where his father held an office under the government, and possessed considerable landed property. From his early childhood he was religiously inclined, and desired to study for the Church; but he was sent to Bristol while yet a youth, to prepare for a mercantile life. There he found that his hostess was a Methodist. He accompanied her to Wesley's society, and soon joined it. After a long period of severe mental suffering, he obtained the "peace in believing" which was professed by his new Christian associates. "One morning," he says, "after I had continued in prayer till I was near fainting, the Spirit of God descended like lightning from heaven; and bare witness with my spirit that I was his adopted child. I looked up to heaven with confidence, and from this moment had a clear and divine evidence of the pardoning love of God, whom I was now emboldened to consider as my Father in Jesus reconciled. My soul now flew with ardor to the ordinances of my God. The name of Jesus was as ointment poured forth. His titles, his character, his offices, appeared unspeakably lovely and glorious. 'My Lord and my God, my Jesus and my all,' was the language of my

[30] Memoirs of Rev. Joseph Entwisle. By his Son. London: 1848.

heart unceasingly."[31] His disposition to enter the ministry now revived, and he was sent by his father to Oxford, where he honorably graduated, and, immediately after, was settled as the assistant of Perronet, at Shoreham. During his residence at Oxford he had maintained his relations with Wesley, receiving him at the college occasionally, and spending his vacations with him in London. At Shoreham he labored three years zealously with Perronet to promote the Methodistic revival, leading classes, preaching in the workhouse and neighboring villages, as well as in the church, and diligently visiting from house to house; but at the death of the aged vicar, he was superseded by an unevangelical successor, who was presented to the living, contrary to the wishes of the parish, by the prebend, to whom the right of presentation belonged. He was subsequently called by Wesley to London, where, with Creighton, he ministered to the metropolitan Methodist societies through the remainder of his life. Both these clergymen co-operated heartily in Wesley's plans, and were his assistant presbyters in his ordinations.

One inestimable blessing, at least, survived to him from Shoreham; he married the granddaughter of Perronet who had, as we have seen, closed in death the eyes of the aged saint. Dickinson could afterward write: "It is now between eleven and twelve years since our hands were joined together, during which time we have enjoyed an uninterrupted state of happiness, so kindly hath God dealt with us even in this state of trial!" In London he was constantly employed, preaching, visiting the sick, attending prayer-meetings, classes, bands, love-feasts, watch-nights, and quarterly meetings. With a profound piety bordering on mysticism, a holiness of heart which enabled him to maintain, amid his indefatigable outward activities, a realm of peaceful solitude within, where his spirit dwelt quietly with God, he pursued his course down to the year 1802,

[31] Memoirs of Rev. Peard Dickinson, Jackson's Christian Biog., vol. ii, p. 88. New York: 1837.

when he departed to heaven by a death of remarkable triumph. "I shall go to the upper courts," he said to the group at his bedside. "'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?' Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Addressing his wife, he added: "The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade on thy right hand; the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul: I speak this to you, my dear." To one of his attendants he remarked: "I have not a shadow of doubt; my evidence is as clear as the noon-day sun! I have nothing but glory and heaven in my view; my heart is full of God; my cup runneth over!" Having had a very severe convulsion, and being extremely weak, he said: "What a mercy it is that the Lord careth for the righteous!" A friend replied: "He does, and it shall be well with them." "Yes," said the dying man, "well for ever and ever: glory be to God!" "My dear love, sweet is thy voice to me; God bless you!" were the last words he spoke to his wife. An attendant conversed with him. "Stop!" he exclaimed; "say nothing but—Glory! glory!" the last words he ever spoke.

The forty-fifth Conference began its session in London on the 29th of July, 1788; 30 candidates were received on probation;[32] 5 probationers were admitted to membership; 7 members had died during the ecclesiastical year; 5 ceased to travel; 298 received appointments, including 5 missionaries who were sent to the West Indies.

The circuits and mission stations were reported at 105. The collections amounted to £2,405. The number of members was 70,614; the increase was 5,634. The number in the United States was 31,468; the increase 3,169. The

[32] One of these was John Hickling, who survived till 1859—the last of Wesley's "helpers." He had preached more than seventy years, and though ninety-three years old when he died, his services during his last three years averaged three each week; and when he lay dead, he was announced by printed handbills for no less than six special occasions.

aggregate membership was 102,082; the aggregate increase 8,803.

It was ordered at this session that no chapel should be built till it was settled on the Conference plan, and a form of deed for that purpose was prescribed. Another step toward the independence of the Methodist societies was also now taken. "Assistants" were allowed to read the Liturgy in the chapels on Sunday mornings, if a majority of the people acquiesced, and service was prohibited, in "Church hours," only on Sundays when the Lord's Supper should be administered in the parish churches; but the people were to be strenuously exhorted to receive the sacrament at the latter on such occasions. The relation of Methodism to the Church was considered at this session. Wesley says that the sum of a long conversation was, first, that in a course of fifty years they had neither premeditatedly nor willingly varied from it in one article of doctrine or discipline; second, that they were not yet conscious of varying from it in any one point of doctrine; third, that they had, in a course of years, out of necessity, not choice, slowly and warily varied in some points of discipline, by preaching in the fields, by extemporary prayer, by employing lay preachers, by forming and regulating societies, and by holding yearly Conferences. "But, he adds, "we did none of these things till we were convinced we could no longer omit them but at the peril of our souls."[33] He held a Conference with his Irish preachers in Dublin before the next regular session in England, and says, in his Journal, that he had never had between forty and fifty such preachers together in Ireland before; all of them apparently alive to God, and earnestly devoted to his service; and that he never saw such a number of preachers before so unanimous in all points, particularly as to leaving the Church, which none of them had the least thought of. "It is no wonder," he continues, "that there has been this year so large an increase of the society. Such a body of men I hardly believed could have

[33] Journal, August, 1788, Works, vol. iv.

been found together in Ireland; men of such sound experience, such deep piety, and such strong understanding. I am convinced they are in no way inferior to the English Conference, except it be in number."

On the 28th of July, 1789, the forty-sixth session began in Leeds; 25 candidates were admitted on trial; 18 probationers were admitted to membership; 4 located, and 4 had died in the last ecclesiastical year; 288 received appointments. The number of circuits and mission stations was 109, omitting Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. The collections amounted to £2,403. The number of members in the societies was 74,254, not including those of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, which were not reported. The increase in Great Britain and Ireland was 4,277.

Among the regulations adopted at this Conference, it was ordered that the Rules of the United Society should be read quarterly in every society; that no persons should be admitted to love-feasts without tickets or notes from the "assistant," or preacher in charge; that all moneys collected at love-feasts should be "most conscientiously" given to the poor; that all preachers should be home by nine o'clock at night, and of course evening meetings were to be concluded in time for the purpose.

The case of Dewsbury chapel, heretofore mentioned, occupied much of the attention of the Conference, and was met by Wesley with characteristic decision. That edifice had been built by contributions from several Methodist societies; but the trustees, apparently incapable, as has at some other times been the case, of appreciating the importance of maintaining the connectional and itinerant principles of Methodism, refused to settle the property according to the prescribed deed, and claimed the right of receiving or refusing the preachers sent to them from the Conference; an example which, if generally followed, would destroy the effective energy of Methodism. All explanations and remonstrances from Wesley, and from repeated committees of the Conference, failed to convince them of their error.

Two of his preachers joined the trustees, and took charge of the society; only two members of the latter remained steadfast to Methodism. The Conference could not sanction so perilous a precedent, and called upon the Connection to contribute moneys for the erection of a new chapel, which was forthwith done, the preachers themselves giving no less than £208. The two recusant preachers spread dis affection around them, and organized societies in Shields, Newcastle, and other towns; but all finally failed. The firm example of the Conference was most salutary, and is worthy to be remembered everywhere, by Methodists who have learned well enough the lesson of their history not to be willing that the general good should be sacri ficed to local convenience, or rather local selfishness. The preachers not only subscribed generously for the new church, but one hundred and fifteen of them (all who were present) signed a declaration reaffirming their approval of the deed for the security of chapels.

On the 27th of July, 1790, began at Bristol the forty-seventh Conference, the last at which Wesley presided. At this session 23 candidates were received on probation; 19 were admitted to membership; 2 had died since the last Conference; 2 located; 313 were recorded on the roll of the appointments. The circuits and mission stations amounted to 119, including again Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. The three financial returns reached the sum of £2,828.

The members of societies were now 76,968; the increase was 2,714.[34] The members in the United States this year amounted to 57,631; their increase to 14,369, the greatest yet reported. Methodism in the new republic was now fast gaining numerically on that of Great Britain.

Its aggregate statistics in both hemispheres were: Circuits, 233; traveling preachers, 540; members, 134,599.[35]

[34] This includes, however, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland which were not reported at the preceding session.

[35] This statement materially differs, in each particular, from Dr. Smith's summary, in his account of the last Conference of Wesley (Hist. of Meth. vol. i, p. 603.) His American figures are those of the preceding year.

Such was the numerical strength of Methodism when Wesley, bending under the weight of eighty-seven years, took his last leave of his assembled preachers, in the same city where, half a century before, he formed his first "band" and erected his first chapel. The scene must have been impressive to the venerable man, and sad, though grateful, to the hearts of his itinerants. "At this Conference," says one of them, "I parted with Mr. Wesley, to see him no more until the resurrection of the just. He appeared very feeble; his eye-sight had failed so much that he could not see to give out the hymns; yet his voice was strong, his spirit remarkably lively, and the powers of his mind, and his love toward his fellow-creatures, were as bright and as ardent as ever."[36]

Seldom, in history, has an individual life been more complete in its results than was that of Wesley at this moment. No prelate of the land, no Englishman whatever, save the sovereign himself, swayed a wider or more profound popular power. No man traveled more extensively among the people, or oftener revisited them in their towns and villages; no man spoke to more of them daily, or had done so during the last half century. His life had not only been thoroughly sustained, but its results were already thoroughly organized, and rendered apparently as effective and permanent as human achievements can be. His power could now, in any necessity, reach almost any part of the three kingdoms by the systematic apparatus of Methodism. His orders, given to his "assistants," who were dispersed through the land, could be conveyed by them to his three hundred preachers, who were continually hastening, like couriers, over their long circuits; by these they could be communicated to twelve hundred local preachers, who, with the itinerants, could convey them to about four thousand stewards and class-leaders, and these, by the private but established means of the societies, could bring them directly to the more than

[36] Charles Atmore, Wesleyan Magazine 1842, p. 123.

seventy thousand members.[37] Such a power, created by himself without prestige, but now wielded with a prestige which secured grateful and almost implicit obedience from his people, would have been perilous in the hands of a weak or selfish man, but in what one historical respect did he abuse it?

Methodism had not only established itself among the masses of the English and American population; we have seen, by occasional glimpses, that it was extending to the smaller British Isles, and to France, to the West Indies, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia. Its introduction into these fields was attended by those providential and often romantic incidents which marked its success elsewhere. Before we turn to the solemn crisis now at hand in its history, let us cast a few glances at some of these lateral scenes of its outgrowth.

[37] I give the estimates of Whitehead, who was an active Methodist at this time. Life of Wesley vol. ii, book iii, chap. 6. The membership in the United Kingdom alone, at this time, amounted to 71,668.

CHAPTER XI.

METHODISM IN THE BRITISH ISLES, FRANCE, NOVA SCOTIA, NEWFOUNDLAND, AND THE WEST INDIES.

The Isle of Man — John Crook's Labors and Trials there — Wesley visits the Island — Great Success of Methodism — The Channel Isles — Remarkable Introduction of Methodism among them — Pierre Le Sueur — Robert Carr Brackenbury — Alexander Kilham — Adam Clarke's Persecutions — Jean de Quetteville — His Trials and Success — Adam Clarke at Alderney — Wesley and Coke visit the Islands — Results — Extraordinary Introduction of Methodism into France — De Quetteville, Mahy, and Coke visit it — De Pontavice — His Services and happy Death — William Toase among the Prison Ships of the Medway — Resumption of the Mission in France — Dr. Charles Cook — His Services to French Protestantism — Extent of Methodism in France — Extent of Protestantism — The Isle of Wight — The "Dairyman's Daughter" — Sketch of her Life — Joseph Sutcliffe introduces Methodism into the Scilly Isles — William Black — Methodism in Nova Scotia — Freeborn Garrettson — Lawrence Coughland, Founder of Methodism in Newfoundland — Providential Introduction of Methodism into the West Indies — Coke at Sea — Nathaniel Gilbert — John Baxter — Black Harry of St. Eustatius — Methodist Negro Missions.

One of the many marvels in the history of Methodism is the success with which it has penetrated to remote or obscure places—to sequestered villages, hidden mountain regions, frontier settlements, and coast islands. The importance which it attached to personal religious zeal, among its laity as well as its ministry, partially explains the fact; but its disciplinary system affords a fuller explanation. Its individual members or families, on removing to new homes, or in their temporary sojourns, were expected to be witnesses for their faith on all possible occasions. If they discovered but one or two of their brethren, or any serious persons, in any place, the prayer-meeting was usually attempted, and its results were gathered into the class-

meeting. The prayer-meeting was often movable from neighborhood to neighborhood, or it was multiplied till it could accommodate with its devotions the inhabitants of various quarters. Lay Methodists were expected to pray and "exhort" in these meetings; not those who did so, but those who did not, were exceptions to the general rule, anomalies excusable only on account of some obvious vocal or mental defect. If there were few or no male members for such services, devout women could perform them; for while Methodism did not receive fully the Quaker opinion respecting female preaching, it allowed its women to take part in these modest meetings, both by prayer and exhortation; and to this fact must be largely attributed the interest and success of its social devotions wherever it has extended.

The removal of a Methodist, or a Methodist family, to a new town or village usually became, therefore, a means of evangelical propagandism; the prayer-meeting producing the class-meeting, the class-meeting becoming the nucleus of the society. Meanwhile the itinerant preacher, rapidly passing over his circuit of thirty or forty towns and villages, could be called in to recognize the new "class:" it became a regular appointment of the circuit, and thus, though on any congregational or local system of ministerial labor it might have been years without a pastor or quickly have become extinct, by the system of Methodism it at once came under pastoral oversight; for thirty or forty such incipient Churches, however poor, could readily support their two, three, or four traveling preachers. The infant society's statistics were reported at the Conference; it contributed to and shared in the Conference finances; it became, in fine, an integral part of the great body. Wesley, meanwhile, sought out men who were suited to the special wants of such new places; Duncan Wright, from the army, Duncan M'Allum, from his humble craft, could preach in Erse among the Highlands of Scotland, and even the remote Shetland Isles were reached. Nathaniel Gilbert, met by Wesley accidentally, or rather providentially, while the planter was seeking health

in England, became a Methodist; his two slaves were baptized, and all of them went back to the tropics to hold meetings in his private house, and to found the new cause in the West Indies, so that when the regular Methodist laborers arrived at Antigua they were welcomed by more than fifteen hundred members of classes. The Isle of Man, with its Manks language, found also among its natives an early supply of laborers for its incipient societies, and became the insular garden of English Methodism. The isles of Jersey and Guernsey received Brackenbury, a layman who could speak their Norman French, and speedily gave Mahy, De Quetteville, De Jersey, and Toase to the itinerant ministry, not only for the Channel Islands, but for France. And thus, in Wesley's own day, while his cause was extending over the main lands, it made also its permanent lodgment in these outposts.

The isles or islets in the British seas comprise 394 square miles; 500 isles and rocks have been enumerated; 175 of these, or of groups of them, are inhabited. The principal ones have a numerous population: the Isle of Man more than 52,000; the Isle of Wight more than 50,000; Guernsey and Shetland more than 20,000 each.[1] Methodism has reached all these, and also many of the smaller isles.

It was introduced into the Isle of Man in the month of March 1775.[2] A native of the island removed to Liverpool, where he heard Wesley's preachers, and becoming a zealous Methodist, was of course immediately concerned for the religious welfare of his friends at home. He entreated John Crook, then a local preacher of Liverpool, but afterward a well known itinerant, to visit them. On Sunday morning, the 11th of March, Crook preached the first Methodist sermon ever heard on the island, in the court-house at Douglas, to a few hearers, who became so numerous at the evening sermon that he had to address them in the open air. A

[1] The English Census for 1851.

[2] The American edition of Moore's Life of Wesley gives erroneously the year 1776.

generous Irishman, who had strayed to the island, and whose brother at home was a Methodist, took the evangelist to his house, and a like-minded Scotchman sheltered him the next day. Crook now proceeded in his good work with energy and hope. One of his hearers on Sunday, procured for him a ball-room at Castletown, and spread notice of his coming. On the first evening the hall was filled; on the next, such was the crowd that he had to address them abroad, the hearers holding lighted candles in their hands. The scene was novel to the islanders if not picturesque, and could not fail to excite a general sensation. The good work had begun and could not now be defeated. A servant of the governor was touched by the truth, and took the preacher to his lodgings, and on the next Sabbath the lieutenant-governor and the clergyman of the town were among his hearers. At Peeltown he spent three weeks, preaching with great success to the fishermen, who received his word with avidity, and followed him, when he left, with tears and blessings.[3]

After a brief visit to Liverpool, required by his business, for this humble man preached at his own expense, Crook returned to the island and found societies already formed in seven different places, and 157 converts connected with them.[4] The usual hostilities of Churchmen and the rabble now broke out; but they had been expected, and were prudently and courageously met by the evangelist. To conciliate the former he read the Homilies in every appointment, but in vain; a paper was put up at the quay admonishing the islanders against "the hypocritical field-preacher who had lately crept in among them to subvert the Church!" A ruffian, encouraged by this opposition, assailed him at Douglas, but on riding home the persecutor was thrown from his horse and instantly killed. At other places on the island Crook was welcomed by large assemblies. It

[3] Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, book iii, chap. 2.

[4] Moore's Life of Wesley, book vii, chap. 4. Coke and Moore say that Crook formed the first society after his second visit at Castletown. Book iii, chap. 2.

was soon taken into the Whitehaven circuit; Crook joined the itinerant ranks, and the Isle of Man became a stronghold of Methodism. Castletown especially was visited, say the early Methodist historians, with "overwhelming showers of saving grace. Many were so convinced of sin as to cry aloud in the disquietude of their hearts; while others rejoiced in God their Saviour with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Nor was Satan idle. A fiddle was brought to the preaching-house, and the rabble shouted mightily; but nothing could shake the steadiness, or divert the attention of the congregation." The school children assailed the preacher in the streets, following him with shouts and pelting him with missiles. Mobs assembled around the building where he preached, attacking it with stones, and wounding the hearers as they came out. Crook especially was the object of their cruelty; he was severely bruised, and was rescued with no small difficulty from their hands, but found sympathy from the clergyman of Peeltown, who saw the usefulness of his labors, for they were filling his church with hearers, and crowding its altar with communicants. The bishop of the island, nevertheless, encouraged the opposition, and issued a mandate commanding all "rectors, vicars, chaplains, and curates" to warn the people against the new comer, and to "repel from the Lord's table every such teacher." The rabble now raged, but the governor would not permit the episcopal warning to be read in his own chapel; his lady remonstrated openly against its intolerance, and the lieutenant-governor introduced Crook into the governor's chapel, where the chaplain disregarded the bishop's authority and gave the well-tried itinerant the communion. Crook was allowed to take his stand at the governor's gates, and preach to the multitude, that officer and his family being seated near by to hear him. A fast was observed by the persecuted society; the opposi tion ceased; the classes increased, and the field was won.

Laborers were soon raised up as exhorters and local preachers, who could address the people in their native language. Smyth, the Methodist clergyman whom we

have seen persecuted in Ireland, came to the isle, and com forted and encouraged its increasing converts. Wesley himself visited it in 1777, and was received at the residence of the late governor by his widow; he was politely called upon by the clergy, though they could not invite him to their pulpits, as the episcopal prohibition was yet in the way. He preached, however, in the churchyards, in the streets, in the market-places, and passed over the whole island addressing immense and wondering assemblies. At a subsequent visit (June, 1781) he found all obstacles swept away; the hostile bishop was dead; his successor was a tolerant man, and Methodism was extending its beneficent work of popular reformation over the entire island. Wesley met the local preachers; they numbered no less than twenty-two. "I never saw in England," he says, "so many stout, well-looking preachers together. If their spirit be answerable to their looks, I know not what can stand before them."

When he took his leave he wrote: "Having now visited the island round, east, south, north, and west, I was thoroughly convinced that we have no such circuit as this either in England, Scotland, or Ireland. It is shut up from the world; and, having little trade, is visited by scarce any strangers. Here are no Papists, no Dissenters of any kind, no Calvinists, no disputers. Here is no opposition, either from the governor, (a mild, humane man,) from the bishop, (a good man,) or from the bulk of the clergy. One or two of them did oppose for a time, but they seem now to understand better; so that we have now rather too little than too much reproach, the scandal of the cross having, for the present, ceased. The natives are a plain, artless, simple people; unpolished, that is, unpolluted; few of them are rich or genteel; the far greater part moderately poor; and most of the strangers that settle among them are men that have seen affliction. The local preachers are men of faith and love, knit together in one mind and one judgment. They speak either Manks or English, and follow a regular plan, which the Assistant gives them monthly. The isle is

supposed to have thirty thousand inhabitants. Allowing half of them to be adults, and our societies to contain one or two and twenty hundred members, what a fair proportion is this! What has been seen like this, in any part either of Great Britain or Ireland?" At his death there were two thousand five hundred Methodists on the island.[5]

In the Bay of St. Michael lie, near the coast of France, the "Channel Islands"—Guernsey, Jersey, and others—the only remnants of the Norman dominions annexed by William the Conqueror to England. The introduction of Methodism into these beautiful islands, and its extension thence into France, are among the most extraordinary episodes in its history.

Their language is the French; their morals in the last century are described as degenerate, and their Churches as generally destitute of vital piety.

Pierre Le Sueur, a native of Jersey, became the proprietor of an estate in Newfoundland, and went thither as a trader. There he heard the faithful exhortations of Lawrence Coughland, a Methodist preacher who, at the instance of Wesley and Lady Huntingdon, was episcopally ordained, and sent to America by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge.[6] He returned to Jersey with an awakened conscience; but his neighbors, to whom he spoke of a change of heart, thought him mad. His own wife hardly thought better of him, and strenuously opposed his new views. He looked in vain for counsel or sympathy till a recent convert, John Fentin, returned from Newfoundland to Jersey and gave him the guidance he needed. They became friends, and co-laborers for the truth. Le Sueur, after

[5] Stephens (Chronicles of Wesleyan Methodism, vol. ii, p. 249) shows that the island reported in 1827 no less than three circuits with twenty-nine chapels, five traveling and seventy-four local preachers, and one Methodist for every fifteen of the inhabitants.

[6] Myles (Chron. Hist., p. 294) gives his name among Wesley's preachers from 1755 to 1765. It was in the latter year that he sailed for Nova Scotia, according to Myles, (p. 170;) in 1768 according to Coke and Moore, (Life of Wesley, p. 478.)

weeping and searching the Scriptures through whole nights, received the peace of God while prostrate in secret prayer. His wife, convinced by his example, began to pray; and after a period of great mental suffering, received, while upon her knees by his side, the consolation which he had obtained. Their conversations and exhortations among their neighbors and kindred soon produced no little excitement, and in about a week twelve persons were awakened and joined them in their devotions, while others violently discussed and opposed their supposed fanaticism. The most energetic opposers were, however, speedily among the converts. Thus, in 1775, began the religious revival which has ever since been more or less prevalent in the Norman Isles. Le Sueur and his Newfoundland friend were zealous in their exhortations and prayers among the people, and in a short time the former was preaching with much success.

In 1779 a pious sea-captain arrived on the island, and, on inquiring for religious associates, was sent to Le Sueur. They quickly understood each other, and prosecuted together the good work which had begun among the islanders, Le Sueur preaching in French, the captain in English.

In 1783 a regiment arrived in which were some devoted soldiers, who had been converted, some in Winchester and others in Southampton, under the labors of Captain Webb, one of the founders of American Methodism,[7] who had returned to England. They wrote home for a preacher; if one were sent who could speak both French and English, they said, "the Gospel would shine over the islands." Le Sueur joined them in this request. The letter was not addressed to Wesley, but to Jasper Winscombe, one of his preachers, at Winchester, who immediately sent it to him. Robert Carr Brackenbury, a wealthy layman, who had begun to preach, and could speak the French language, was present when Wesley read the letter, and was forthwith dispatched to Jersey. He rented a house in St. Helier, preached the

[7] Wesleyan Magazine, 1820, p. 294.

Gospel throughout the island, was joined heartily by the devout soldiers and Le Sueur and his friends, and organized them into Methodist societies; "French and English unanimously declaring, in their respective tongues, at the love-feasts, the manifold works of God." In the midst of his labors Brackenbury was seized by a fever, but, wrote the Methodist soldiers to England, "the squire's man has preached for us since his master's illness." This servant of Brackenbury afterward became an important historical character in the annals of Methodism. He was Alexander Kilham, the founder of the "New Connection" Methodists, a man of piety and talents but of impetuous zeal.

In Jersey, as in almost every other place, Methodism had to win its way through much opposition. The assemblies were interrupted by the clamors of rioters, the windows of the preaching-places were broken, and the preachers attacked with stones in the streets; but an appeal to the magistrates put an end to these disturbances for a season.[8]

In 1786 Wesley sent Adam Clarke to Jersey. The young Methodist scholar pursued there his studies and labors with his usual ardor. He also shared the common trials of his ministerial brethren of those early days. His success again aroused the mob; at St. Aubin they surrounded the preaching-house, nearly tore it down, and periled his life. At another time he was pulled from the pulpit by a magistrate, who headed the rioters. The drummer of the militia attacked him, and drummed him out of the town, followed by the jeering rabble. Clarke, however, had a stout Irish heart, and returned and conquered a peace. His labors prospered, regular preaching was established in the place, and the magistrates and mob learned not only to respect but to admire

[8] The account of Methodism in Jersey by Moore, (book viii, chap. 3,) Coke and Moore, (book iii, chap. 2,) Myles, (chap. 7,) etc., should be corrected by the Memoir of Elizabeth Arrivé, by Rev. William Toase, in the Wesleyan Magazine for 1820, p. 290, et seq. See also Toase's Wesleyan Mission in France, pp. 3–8, (London, 1834,) and Histoire du Méthodisme dans les Iles de la Manche, par Rev. François Guiton. Londres, 1847.

him; they became his warmest friends, and from that time Methodism triumphed in Jersey. "Societies were formed all over the island," and many native preachers and exhorters were raised up.

Meanwhile Pierre Arrivé, from the isle of Guernsey, was brought, by the instrumentality of Le Sueur, (now a local preacher,) to favorable views of the Methodists. Two of Arrivé's sisters were members of the society; he came to remonstrate with them, but returned to his family to open the way for their brethren in his native island. Brackenbury went thither, and thus, in 1785, was the mission of Methodism begun in Guernsey. Dr. Coke visited Jersey, and found among its Methodists a zealous young local preacher, Jean de Quetteville,[9] whom he took to Guernsey, where they formed the first society of the island. De Quetteville became a successful evangelist, and for nearly sixty years labored indefatigably for the promotion of the Gospel in the isles and in France. His French hymns are still sung in all the Methodist congregations of the Channel Islands. He endured stormy persecutions in Guernsey, but prevailed over them all. He was arraigned before the Supreme Court, and was in danger of a sentence of banishment; but the witnesses against him were strangely led to contradict themselves, and to give decisive evidence in his favor, and he was acquitted.[10]

In the year 1787 Adam Clarke went to the island of Alderney. He knew not one of its inhabitants, nor where to find a home when he arrived; but he proceeded alone from the harbor to the town, about one mile, reminding himself of the divine direction: "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house; and in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give." Reaching the

[9] Vie de Jean de Quetteville, etc., par Henri de Jersey, chap. 3. (Londres, 1847.)

[10] He died in 1843, aged 82, leaving Methodism in the Norman Isles with seventeen chapels and other places of worship, fifty-three local preachers, and two thousand five hundred and twenty-eight members of society.

town he walked through it; and observing a very poor cottage, felt an inclination to knock at its door. He did so, pronouncing the benediction, "Peace be to this house." He found in the humble dwelling an old man and woman, who, understanding his errand, bade him "welcome to the best food they had, to a little chamber where he might sleep, and (what was still more acceptable) to their house to preach in." He now saw clearly the hand of Providence in his favor, and was much encouraged. Being unwilling to lose any time, he told them he would preach that evening if they could collect a congregation. The strange news spread rapidly through the town; and long before the appointed hour a multitude of people flocked together, whom he addressed. When he had concluded, it was with much difficulty he could persuade them to depart, after promising to meet them the next evening. He then retired to his little apartment, where he had not rested twenty minutes, when the good woman of the house came and entreated him to preach again, as a crowd, including several of the gentry, were come to hear what he had to say. He went down immediately, and found the house once more full. Deep attention sat on every face while he addressed them. He continued his discourse about an hour, and concluded with informing them what his design was in visiting their island. The congregation then departed, and the concern evident on many of their countenances fully proved that God had added his testimony to that of his servant. The next evening he preached to a large, attentive company. A singular circumstance happened the following day. While he was at dinner a constable came from a person in authority to solicit his immediate appearance at a place called the Bray, (where several reputable families dwelt, and where the gov ernor's stores were kept,) to preach to a company of ladies and gentlemen, who were waiting, and at whose desire one of the large store-rooms was prepared for the purpose. He promptly went, and in a quarter of an hour after his arrival a large company was assembled. The gentry were

not so partial to themselves as to exclude the sailors, smugglers, and laborers, and the missionary was heard by all classes with serious attention.

The next Lord's day he preached in the evening at the same place to a much larger congregation, composed of the principal gentry of the island. The day following being the time appointed for his return, many were unwilling he should leave them, saying, "We have much need of such preaching and such a preacher; we wish you would abide in the island, and go back no more." Fortunately, the vessel was aground, and he was detained till the next morning, to the great joy of his new friends. He preached to them again with greater effect than before, and after an affectionate parting, re-embarked for Guernsey. Adam Clarke thus introduced Methodism into Alderney. The native local preachers of Jersey and Guernsey soon followed his visit, a large society was formed, a chapel built, and the new cause permanently established.

Wesley, ever prompt to perceive and seize providential opportunities, was so interested in the prospects of these islands that, in his eighty-fourth year, he visited them himself, accompanied by Dr. Coke. The voyage nearly proved fatal by shipwreck; and they were compelled, by adverse winds, to land at the island of Alderney, where the aged apostle preached on the sea-beach. From the 14th of August to the 1st of September he continued preaching and exhorting from house to house, and hastening from island to island with the ardor of a young missionary. In Guernsey he was received at the residence of De Jersey, a gentleman of fortune, whose whole family afterward joined the society, and has become historical in the Norman Methodist annals. Great congregations gathered to hear the two visitors; they preached daily, not only in the houses, but often in the open air; the highest classes of the inhabitants, including the governors, treated them with the utmost courtesy, entertaining them at their tables and thronging to their assemblies; and Wesley speaks of "very genteel congrega-

tions, such as he had rarely seen in England." Their visit gave new importance to Methodism throughout the islands.

As late as 1834 one of the Norman preachers writes that "no part of the exterior field of ministerial labor cultivated by the Wesleyan ministers has been more fruitful than these islands." From its small beginnings the revival had spread till nearly every parish in Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, and Sark had its commodious chapel and numerous congregation.[11] In our day they report 3,224 members of society, 2,528 of whom are French.[12]

But a still more important result was to attend the establishment of Methodism in the Channel Islands. Wesley predicted that they would be outposts looking toward the Continent, from which evangelical religion would, sooner or later, invade France, to aid in reawakening its hundreds of thousands of Protestants who had declined from the piety of their Huguenotic fathers. Rationalism had spread moral enervation through nearly all their Churches, and popery hedged them in and repressed them on all sides. Their fate seemed nearly hopeless, but the Methodistic movement proceeded by faith rather than by sight, and in the year 1790 the Methodists of Guernsey began to direct their attention toward Normandy. Jean de Quetteville and John Angel went over and bore the message of the Gospel to many villages. William Mahy, a Guernsey local preacher, soon followed them. Coke, always hastening to and fro, visited Normandy, and at Courseulles ordained Mahy, a fact memorable as the first Methodist ordination on the continent of Europe. De Quetteville, with Coke, went to Paris, where they hired a place for public worship, but soon after abandoned it; De Quetteville had the honor, however, of preaching the first Methodist sermon in the French metropolis.[13] Meanwhile the people of Normandy flocked to hear Mahy, and many were awakened and converted in the villages of Courseulles, Cresserons, Beuville, and Périers. He ex-

[11] Toase's Wesleyan Mission in France, p. 8.
[12] Minutes of the Conference. London, 1858. [13] Toase, p. 15.

tended his travels to Condé, and the Protestant Churches of St. Honorine, Athis, Montilly, Fresne, Chefresne, and Mont Tabor welcomed him, and shared in the benefits of his ministerial labors. Many Roman Catholics, whose priests had fled in the terrors of the Revolution, heard him gladly, and the Protestant churches were readily opened to him. The consistory of Caen alone excluded him, but in that town he organized a society of about one hundred members. Severe persecutions, however, soon followed; Mahy was driven out of town after town, his health failed, his intellect was crushed by his sufferings, and the storms of the Revolution swept back all the laborers who had gone over from the islands; but the good seed which had been sown was not destroyed; it remained in the moral soil, to spring up in more genial times.

Among the refugees in the Isle of Jersey, during the Revolution, was Pierre de Pontavice, a nobleman of an illustrious house in Brittany. He was a papist, but while hearing Richard Reece preach, on the island, his conscience was smitten, and on a visit to England he was converted under a prayer of William Bramwell. He became a zealous Methodist, and by Coke's influence was, in due time, received on trial as a preacher by the Wesleyan Conference. He ministered with success to the societies in Guernsey and Jersey, but being anxious for the salvation of his countrymen, he went to France in 1802. He was received as an angel from heaven by the suffering societies which had been founded by Mahy at Beuville, Périers, and other places. He translated Methodist books and tracts, and scattered them among the people. To facilitate his labors it was judged expedient for him to join the Protestant Church of France, and he became pastor of Bolbec, but continued his ministrations with zeal at Beuville and Périers, and by his frequent visits kept alive among them the piety which had already been kindled by the preaching of Mahy and De Quetteville. During eight years did he continue his missionary struggles, when, smitten by mortal disease, he went from Bolbec to Beuville "to die," as he said, "among his beloved friends." His death was very triumph

ant, and "made an impression on the people which will never be forgotten." Such was his dying joy that he would allow his afflicted brethren to talk of nothing around his sick bed but of the heaven to which he was certain that he was going. When, anxious for the fate of their societies, they asked him, "What shall we do when you are taken from us?" his answer was, "You know the way of salvation; only be faithful and all will be well." His fellow-Methodists buried him in a garden belonging to one of them, where they afterward affectionately commemorated him by a humble monument. He had saved the Methodist movement in France thus far in the absence of the proscribed British preachers. But what was now to become of it?

The historian of the French Wesleyan mission dwells on the remarkable providence which, now that the mission was entirely suspended by the deaths of Mahy and Pontavice, opened the way for new laborers.[14] He himself entered the itinerant ministry in 1804. On the river Medway floated ships crowded with wretched French prisoners of war; he began to labor among them as a missionary, but the British officers opposed, and at last excluded him. Joseph Butterworth, brother-in-law of Adam Clarke, a Methodist member of Parliament, who is honorably commemorated in our day by a monument in City Road Chapel, corresponded with the government, as did also Dr. Coke, and procured the zealous evangelist permission to pursue his good work. French officers, as well as soldiers and sailors, heard his word, and received his friendship in their affliction with touching gratitude. He extended his labors from ship to ship, till he had ten under his pastoral care. He formed libraries on board, distributed tracts, visited the sick, comforted the dying, prayed and preached; and not a few were raised up to eternal life by his instrumentality. Local preachers from the Channel Islands were sent to help him. De Kerpezdron, one of these, went to France as a missionary when peace was proclaimed. And now as the cartels began to carry back the prisoners,

[14] Toase's Wesleyan Mission in France, p. 24.

Bibles were sent with them; their Methodist volunteer chaplain preached to them his last sermon from the appropriate words, "La paix soit avec vous," "Peace be with you." "You found us naked," said some of them, as they took their leave with tears, "you found us naked and you clothed us, in prison and you visited us." Many hundreds had been taught to read the Bible. "We are glad," they said, "to possess this book; we will carry it home to our families." "This Bible shall remain in my family." Great numbers of the divine book were thus sent into France and to all parts of the Continent.

De Quetteville, Le Sueur, and Ollivier hastened to France, and again the societies in Normandy had the bread of life from their hands. But the return of Napoleon from Elba compelled the evangelists to fly back to the islands. The battle of Waterloo secured another peace, and the laborers again hastened to their old contested fields. Toase, accompanied by Richard Robarts and Benjamin Frankland, passed into Normandy, and in 1818 Charles Cook followed them. Cook studied the French language, and though not the first, he became the chief founder of French Methodism. It was now established, never again, it may be hoped, to be defeated. Henry de Jersey followed Cook in 1819. The latter traversed the country; societies were organized in the north, in Paris, in the south; circuits were formed, a native ministry raised up and recruited year after year, chiefly from the Channel Islands; an evangelical party began to appear in the Huguenotic Church, and has ever since continued to grow in moral strength and in control of the Protestant ecclesiastical affairs of the country. A clergyman of the national Protestant Church has acknowledged that "among those who were privileged to take part in this revival" of the national Protestantism, "Dr. Charles Cook was not the least influential."[15] And D'Aubigné, the historian of the Great Reformation, has declared that "the work which John

[15] Letter from Professor G. de Felice, Montauban, France, to the New York Observer, July 22, 1858.

Wesley did in Great Britain Charles Cook has done, though on a smaller scale, on the Continent."[16]

Cook preached his first French sermon at Beuville, December 3, 1818. On the 20th of April, 1820, the first French District meeting was held at Périers, William Toase, Amice Ollivier, J. Hawtrey, Charles Cook, and Henry de Jersey being present. The first French Methodist Love-feast was held in an old chateau at Perrieres on Sunday, April 30, 1820, a scene of affecting interest.[17] The English Wesleyan Mission in Paris was commenced by Rev. Robert Newstead in 1833. French Methodism was organized into a separate Conference in 1852. Through many adversities—reverses, persecutions, and imprisonments—the evangelists have toiled on, and when Cook fell at his post, in 1858, lamented by D'Aubigné, Malan, Gaussen, the Monods, and his other eminent co-laborers in the revival of French Protestantism, there were two Methodist districts (north and south) in France, 12 circuits, (including Switzerland and Piedmont,) 141 chapels and other places of worship, 26 traveling laborers, 65 local preachers, and 1,386 members, with day and Sunday schools, a monthly "journal," Tract and Missionary societies, and contributions amounting to 33,000 francs for religious charities.[18] Methodism, notwithstanding its comparative feebleness in France, has had an influence, not merely as an example, but by its direct agency, on the prospects of French Christianity.

Protestantism has remained, since the Reformation, an important element in the religious population of the country. It presents its chief strength in the south. Its churches appear quite densely on the map[19] from the high Alps, through

[16] Letter on the Death of Cook, New York Observer, July 22, 1858.

[17] See an account of it in Memoirs of Margaret de Jersey Toase, p. 82. London, 1859.

[18] Letter from Professor G. de Felice. They have since been reported at 152 chapels or places of worship; 29 ministers; 72 local preachers, and about 1,500 members.

[19] Map issued by the "Minister of Public Instruction and Worship," giving the consistorial boundaries of the National Reformed Church.

Vaucluse, Gard, Herault, Tarn, and Garonne, to the Basses Pyrenées. Following the river Garonne from Clairac in the southwest, northward, almost to its mouth, we pass through a region which is nearly destitute of Protestant churches; but at its mouth they again dot the map, and extend into Charante, Vienne, Deux Sevres, and even Vendée. La Rochelle, so famous in French Protestant history, is mid way on the western boundary of this region. Then appears a large section of the northwest of France almost entirely without them; but on the north they again thicken on the Seine, (Inferieure,) in Somme, the Pas de Calais, Nord, Aisne, and other places. Striking inland from this region of the north, we trace a long range of them to Paris, and from Paris quite into the heart of the country beyond Orleans.

On the east of the country they again dot the surface of all the region which lies between the Moselle and the Rhine, and include the important city of Strasburg as their head-quarters.

Thus French Protestantism has established its main strength on limited sections of the north, south, east, and west, with a somewhat strong line of communication between the first of these points and the central region of the country. There are forty thousand Protestants in Paris alone, besides the floating Protestant population.

The two national Protestant Churches, the "Reformed" and the "Lutheran," (the latter in the east,) comprise about 2,000,000 of people, 762 ministers, 800 chapels, 2 theological seminaries, and 17 periodical publications. With other Protestant bodies they now maintain Missionary, Bible, Tract, and other religious "enterprises." When Cook arrived among them they had not one of these charities, or a single religious journal. There were but two or three of the regular clergy known as "evangelical" preachers. Three hundred at least are now known as such.

The divine light then still shines in France, however it may have flickered through several doubtful ages. Popery, with all its Gallic pomp and pretension, has not secure possession of the country. If the battle of the Reformation on

its soil was suspended, it was not ended. The opposing forces are yet in the field, and are yet formidable on both sides. There are to be some momentous evangelical combats again in France, as the signs of the times show. The massacre of St. Bartholomew strewed the country with slaughtered Protestants, but their bones at least have been preserved, and the breath of God will raise them up, as in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, a mighty army. It is now breathing upon them. Methodism has extended its circuits to the High Alps, and to important points of Switzerland. It has reached the Piedmontese valleys, and been welcomed among the ancient Vaudois Protestants, but its destined work seems yet in its incipiency.

Methodism was permanently established on the Isle of Wight in 1779.[20] The first appointment of a Methodist preacher to this celebrated island was in 1787; the next year it was omitted from the appointments; in 1789 two preachers were sent to it; from 1790 to 1808 it did not appear in the Minutes, but was appended to the Portsmouth circuit.[21] Methodism had reached it, however, many years before the first of these dates. As early as 1753 Wesley visited it and found there "a little society in tolerable order, and several of them had found peace with God."[22] He preached in the market-place at Newport to a numerous congregation. In October of the same year he returned, and preached with much success in the same place. Most of the inhabitants of the town, and many from the neighboring villages, were in his congregation. "Surely," he wrote, "if there was any here to preach the word of God with power, a multitude would soon be obedient to the faith." He admired the scenery of the island—a gem of landscape beauty on the brow of the sea—and spoke of the inhabitants as a "humane, loving people." He was with them again briefly in 1758. His next visit was in the latter part of 1782,

[20] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i, p. 468.

[21] Stephens's Chronicles of Methodism, vol. ii. p. 106, compared with p. 175. London, 1827.

[22] Journal, July, 1753.

when he found them "ripe for the Gospel." The preachers of the neighboring circuit of Portsmouth had now evidently extended their labors to the island, and had met and overcome the usual hostilities, for he says, "opposition is at an end; only let our preachers be men of faith and love, and they will see the fruit of their labors;" and in 1783 he records that "there is much life among the people here, and they walk worthy of their profession." In 1785 he still found that "the work of God prospered there."

A single character has consecrated the Isle of Wight forever in the history of Methodism and the regards of the Christian world.

A clergyman of the Church of England received one day, from the hand of his servant, a note, with word that the bearer waited at the gate of the parsonage. He went out to speak to the peasant, and found him a "venerable man, whose long, hoary hair and deeply wrinkled countenance claimed more than ordinary respect." He was resting upon the gate, and tears were streaming down his cheeks; he made a low bow to the pastor and said, "I have brought you a letter from my daughter, but fear you will think us very bold in asking you to take so much trouble." The old man wept for the loss of his child. The letter was from his only remaining daughter, and invited the preacher to attend the funeral of her sister. It was remarkable for its simple but devout sentiments. "What is your occupation?" asked the pastor. "Sir, I have lived most of my days in a little cottage at Arreton, six miles from here. I have rented a few acres of ground, and kept some cows, which, in addition to my day labor, have been the means of supporting and bringing up my family." "What family have you?" "A wife, now getting very aged and helpless, two sons, and one daughter; for my other poor dear child has just departed out of this wicked world." "I hope for the better." "I hope so too: poor thing, she did not use to take to such good ways as her sister; but I do believe that her sister's manner of talking with her before she died was the means

of saving her soul. What a mercy it is to have such a child as mine is! I never thought about my own soul seriously till she, poor girl, begged and prayed me to flee from the wrath to come." "How old are you?" "Near seventy, and my wife is older; we are getting old, and almost past our labor; but our daughter has left a good place, where she lived in service, on purpose to come home and take care of us and our little dairy. And a dear, dutiful, affectionate girl she is."

The aged man, his wife, his dead child, and one of his sons had been converted through the instrumentality of this Christian maiden, and his cottage had become a rustic sanctuary, fit in its simple and beautiful piety for the visitation of angels.

The clergyman attended the funeral, and as he sat in the group of mourners in the cottage, he was impressed by the affecting picture of simple life and domestic virtue and sorrow which it presented; and was "struck with the humble, pious, and pleasing countenance of the young woman" from whom he had received the letter. "It bore the marks of great seriousness without affectation, and of much serenity mingled with a glow of devotion." At the grave a profligate spectator was smitten by the scene, and by a sentence of the burial service, and became a regenerated man.

The pious curate repeated his visits, and learned among these peasants lessons of divinity which the books of the great Doctors of the Church could not teach him. He has recorded the touching story of these interviews and lessons. All the Protestant world has read and re-read, and will probably continue to read the record, till the end of time, with glowing hearts and flowing tears. Such was his estimation of the Christian peasant girl that he maintained a correspondence with her as well as visited her. Her letters are admirable for their good sense, and affecting by their piety, their natural tenderness, and their maidenly modesty. She was living "out at service," to provide for her aged parents. "Dear sir, I thank you," she wrote, "for your

kindness and condescension in leaving those that are of high rank and birth in the world to converse with me, who am but a servant here below. But when I consider what a high calling, what honor and dignity God has conferred upon me, to be called his child, to be born of his Spirit, made an heir of glory, and joint heir with Christ; how humble and cir cumspect should I be in all my ways, as a dutiful and loving child to an affectionate and loving Father! When I seriously consider these things it fills me with love and gratitude to God, and I do not wish for any higher station, nor envy the rich. I rather pity them if they are not good as well as great. My blessed Lord was pleased to appear in the form of a servant, and I long to be like him."

Time passes, and the saintly girl ripens for heaven, growing in grace herself, and dispensing blessings to all who come within her lonely sphere of life. The pastor receives another simple note at his gate. It calls him to attend his humble correspondent in her last sickness, which was a rapid consumption. "A sweet smile of friendly complacency enlightened her pale countenance" as she welcomed him, supported in an arm-chair by pillows. "You find me," she said, "daily wasting away, and I cannot have long to continue here; my flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my weak heart, and I trust will be my portion forever." A long conversation ensued. "I looked around me as she was speaking," says the visitor, "and thought, surely this is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven!"

One day he received a hasty summons informing him that she was dying. It was brought by a soldier, whose countenance bespoke seriousness, good sense, and piety. "She is going home, sir, very fast," said the veteran. "Have you known her long?" asked the pastor. "About a month, sir: I love to visit the sick; and hearing of her case, from a person who lives close by our camp, I went to see her. I bless God that ever I did go. Her conversation has been very profitable to me." "I rejoice," said the preacher, "to see

m you, as I trust, a brother soldier. Though we differ in our outward regimentals, I hope we serve under the same spiritual Captain. I will go with you." "She is a bright diamond, sir," said the soldier, "and will soon shine brighter than any diamond upon earth."

Over the face of the invalid, though pale, sunken, and hollow, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, had cast a triumphant calm. The soldier, after a short pause, silently reached out his Bible toward the pastor, pointing with his finger at 1 Cor. xv, 55, 56, 58. The preacher read aloud, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." At the sound of these words the sufferer opened her eyes, and something like a ray of divine light beamed on her countenance as she said, "Victory! victory! through our Lord Jesus Christ." She relapsed again, taking no further notice of any one present. "God be praised for the triumph of faith!" said the pastor. "Amen!" replied the soldier. A short struggle for breath took place in the dying young woman, which was soon over. "My dear friend, do you not feel that you are supported?" asked the pastor. "The Lord deals very gently with me," she replied. "Are not his promises now very precious to you?" "They are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus." "Are you in much bodily pain?" "So little that I almost forget it." "How good the Lord is!" "And how unworthy am I!" "You are going to see him as he is." "I think—I hope—I believe that I am." "What are your views of the dark valley of death, now that you are passing through it?" "It is not dark." "Why so?" "My Lord is there, and he is my light and my salvation." "Have you any fears of more bodily suffering?" "The Lord deals so gently with me, I can trust him." A convulsion came on. When it was past, she said again and again, "The Lord deals very gently with me. Lord, I am thine, save me—Blessed Jesus—precious

Saviour—His blood cleanseth from all sin—Who shall separate?—His name is Wonderful—Thanks be to God—He giveth us the victory—I, even I, am saved—O grace, mercy, and wonder—Lord, receive my spirit! Dear sir—dear father, mother, friends, I am going—but all is well, well—"

"Farewell," said the preacher, as he returned home; "farewell, dear friend, till the morning of an eternal day shall renew our personal intercourse. Thou wast a brand plucked from the burning, that thou mightest become a star shining in the firmament of glory. I have seen thy light and thy good works, and will therefore glorify our Father which is in heaven."

He attended her funeral, and has described the scene, more beautiful than mournful. An aged Christian matron, "remarkably decent looking," managed the few and simple ceremonies of the occasion. She had been the Methodist "class-leader" of the dead maiden. "This," she said to the clergyman, "is rather a sight of joy than of sorrow." "Her soul is with her Saviour in Paradise," he replied. "I am but a poor soldier," said the military mourner, "and have nothing of this world's goods beyond my daily subsistence; but I would not exchange my hope of salvation in the next world for all that this world could bestow without it. What is wealth without grace? Blessed be God! as I march about from one quarters to another, I still find the Lord wherever I go; and, thanks be to his holy name! he is here to-day in the midst of this company of the living and the dead. I feel that it is good to be here."

"Peace," said the preacher, as he retired to lead the procession, "peace, my honored sister, be to thy memory and to *my* soul till we meet in a better world." Her humble brethren and sisters bore her to the grave with a hymn, the singing of which was led by a venerable Methodist of Newport.

Such are only a few references to the most affecting, the most generally read of Christian idyls—The Life and Death

of Elizabeth Wallbridge, the "Dairyman's Daughter," loved and wept by millions, in the palaces of the wealthy, the cottages and hovels of the poor, the log-cabins of emigrants in the frontier wildernesses of America and Australia, and in the homes of converted heathen throughout most of the missionary world.[22] No history of Methodism that should omit her name would be complete; for though her simple story touches no important chronological point of that history, none of its great public facts, yet what better illustration do its annals afford of the essential spirit of Methodism, the spirit without which the letter would be dead? what better illustration of its beneficent and appointed task of bearing the purifying and consoling blessings of the Gospel to the homes of the lowly? Though the beautiful vision of the Dairyman's Daughter flits but briefly across our historic track, yet she passes over it as an angel, leaving an unfading light upon her path, reminding Methodists in all the world, and probably for all ages, of the great lesson of their cause, its providential design, the preaching of the Gospel to the poor. And her life, obscure in itself, has become historical in its results; thousands have owed their salvation to its record; tens of thousands have received comfort and strength from it in their hours of extremity. It has been translated into at least thirty languages, and her grave attracts to her native island more pilgrims than go to see its unrivaled scenery, or to gaze upon the residence of the queen of her country, which adorns its beautiful coast.

In 1795 the Isle of Wight was attached to the Portsmouth circuit, which then included "two missions," one of them comprising parts of Sussex and Surrey, the other, portions of the island. Five preachers traveled this circuit. One of them, James Crabb, while preaching in Portsmouth, was

[22] The Dairyman's Daughter, an Authentic Narrative, by Rev. Legh Richmond: comprising much additional matter, edited by S. B. Wickens, and published at the Methodist Book-rooms, New York: the best edition of this Christian classic yet issued.

instrumental in the conversion of Elizabeth Wallbridge, who was then residing in that town as a domestic servant.[23] On returning to the island her sanctified life, Christian conversations, charities, and prayers, among the sick and poor. were productive of great good, and endeared her memory to all circles of its inhabitants. All her family became exemplary Christians, and one of her brothers was a useful local preacher among the islanders for more than forty years.[24] A Methodist chapel now marks the scene where "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof" paused for a moment to receive her spirit, and hard by still stands the Dairyman's cottage, in its original rustic simplicity.

Methodism has continued to prosper on the Isle of Wight. In 1847 it reported twenty-three local preachers and eleven chapels.[25]

In the year 1788 Joseph Sutcliffe introduced Methodism into the Scilly Isles. He was traveling the St. Ives circuit, in Cornwall, and, on crossing the point of Land's End, felt an irrepressible interest for "the souls of the poor smug glers," who were "notorious on those rocks of the sea." He prayed his two colleagues to spare him for one week; they replied: "If we let you go we must supply your appointments, and we have not a night at liberty." But one day a Cornish Methodist called to say that his men had agreed to forego a night's fishing in order to take Sutcliffe to Scilly. This was an opening of Providence, which so influ-

[23] See the facts of her Methodistic history in "A Further Account of the Dairyman's Daughter, by Rev. Benjamin Carvosso," (Wesleyan Magazine, 1838.) This, together with additional letters of Elizabeth Wallbridge, her Will, a letter from Rev. Mr. Crabb respecting her, "A Short Account of the Dairyman" himself, and other interesting documents, is given in the Appendix to Mr. Wickens's edition of the "Dairyman's Daughter." As Richmond wrote his sketch from memory, he mistook Mr. Crabb, the itinerant, for a missionary, windbound at the island, on his way to New South Wales. The Dairyman's Daughter died May 30, 1801. Her mother died a few months later. The Dairyman survived some years, and died in the faith, aged eighty-four.

[24] Wesleyan Magazine, 1841, p. 355.

[25] Stephens's Chronicles, vol. ii, p. 106. I have not been able to distinguish its later statistics from those of the rest of the circuit.

enced preachers and people that they were afraid to obstruct the evangelist any longer. Accordingly he sailed. On arriving he stood up at the door of an inn, and cried aloud, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" and again in the evening proclaimed, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." He returned the same night, after promising to revisit the islands; which he did shortly after, remaining for a week, when a class was formed of three miners who had been Methodists in Cornwall. He could not procure his saddle-bags from the people without a promise that he would again return. His third visit, which was to be for three weeks, was extended to three months, as he was detained by a strong east wind, while the roads of Scilly exhibited the masts of ships of many nations, waiting for a fair wind to return to their own ports. Some gentlemen procured the court-house for his meetings, and he was allowed also to preach once in St. Martin's Church. One of the regular clergymen of the island, having had a fit which impaired his speech, only preached once on the Lord's day; the other never officiated, and the prayers were read by a sailor. The visit of Sutcliffe was therefore seasonable, and could not fail to be successful. Land was given for a chapel, and he had the satisfaction of seeing thirty-seven persons joined in a society. On asking for his bill for board as he left, the reply was, "The workman is worthy of his meat." A lady at St. Agnes slipped a paper into his hand, after his last sermon, containing five guineas. This, he says, "was a God-send;" for the people had no hymn books, and it enabled him to provide them. The converts kept together till a regular preacher was sent, and Methodism has ever since maintained itself among these islands.[26]

In the year 1779 William Black, the chief, though not

[26] Letter of Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe in Wesleyan Magazine, 1856, p. 503.

the original founder of Methodism in the eastern British Provinces of North America, was converted in Nova Scotia.[27] He was born in Huddersfield, England, in 1760. In 1774 he emigrated with his family to Nova Scotia. They found a few Methodist settlers at Amherst, who, without a pastor, maintained meetings for exhortation and prayer. It was at these meetings that the young emigrant received his first effectual impressions of the truth. After nearly five weeks of religious anguish, an old Methodist, who was praying with him, said: "I think you will get the blessing before morning." "About two hours after," says Black, "while we were singing a hymn, it pleased God to reveal his Son in my heart." He now introduced domestic worship into his father's house, and soon most if not all its members were converted. In 1780 he began to exhort in public at Fort Lawrence, and with such success that two hundred persons were gathered into classes, one hundred and thirty of whom professed to have "passed from death unto life." He had, in fine, become a preacher, and before long was "itinerating," proclaiming the faith at Amherst, Fort Lawrence, Cornwallis, Horton, Falmouth, Windsor, and Halifax. Methodism was thus permanently founded in Nova Scotia.

In 1784 his societies were too numerous for him to supply them alone. He went to Boston to see Dr. Coke, and solicit assistance. His preaching in that city was attended with unusual interest; several churches were opened to him, and his memory is still revered there. He was the first Methodist preacher who appeared in New England after the visit of Charles Wesley.

In 1786 his name appears for the first time in Wesley's Minutes, though he had devoted himself exclusively to minis-

[27] Memoir of Rev. W. Black, by Rev. M. Richey, chap. 2. (Halifax, N. S., 1839.) Methodism in these Provinces has always been under the care of the Wesleyan body in England; I therefore refer to them here. In the Canadas it was, for many years, connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, and will be noticed in the volumes on America.

terial labors for five years, and his circuit embraced the whole province and extended to Newfoundland, and at last took in New Brunswick.

Freeborn Garrettson and James O. Cromwell were sent from the United States to his assistance in 1785.[28] Garrettson was a man of cordial spirit and amiable simplicity of manners, but a hero at heart. He had been well tried in the States; a gentleman of wealth and character, he had nevertheless been mobbed, imprisoned, and his life periled. In a letter which he addressed to Wesley, soon after his arrival in the province, he says: "My lot has mostly been cast in new places, to form circuits, which much exposed me to persecution. Once I was imprisoned; twice beaten; left on the highway speechless and senseless, and must have gone into a world of spirits, had not God in mercy sent a good Samaritan that bled me, and took me to a friend's house; once shot at; guns and pistols presented at my breast; once delivered from an armed mob, in the dead time of night, on the highway, by a surprising flash of lightning; surrounded frequently by mobs; stoned frequently; I have had to escape for my life at night. O! shall I ever forget the Divine hand which has supported me?"

He traveled over these northern regions with indefatigable zeal. Societies were formed, chapels built, preachers raised up, and the new cause generally fortified. In his semi-centennial sermon he speaks of his itinerant toils and sufferings there. "I traversed," he says, "the mountains and valleys, frequently on foot, with my knapsack on my back, guided by Indian paths in the wilderness, when it was not expedient to take a horse; and I had often to wade through morasses half leg deep in mud and water; frequently satisfying my hunger with a piece of bread and pork from my knapsack, quenching my thirst from a brook, and resting my weary limbs on the leaves of the trees. Thanks be to God! he compensated me for all my toil, for many precious souls were awakened and converted."

[28] Life of Garrettson, by Rev. Dr. Bangs, chap. 11.

With John Mann, Cromwell, and Black for co-laborers, Garrettson soon extended Methodism through most of the eastern provinces. He continued his labors there till the spring of 1787, and at the death of Wesley, in 1791, the new field reported nearly nine hundred Methodists, with eight circuits and nine preachers.

The introduction of Methodism into Newfoundland occurred, as we have seen, in the year 1765, under the ministration of Lawrence Coughland. He continued there about seven years, suffering severe persecutions. He was prosecuted in the highest court of the island, but was acquitted; abusive letters were written to England against him; a physician was engaged to poison him, but, becoming converted, exposed the diabolical design. Meanwhile the success of the missionary increased; he added many converts to his society; but the fury of his enemies became still more violent. They had him summoned before the governor, a discerning and resolute officer, who not only acquitted him, but made him a justice of the peace. His opposers were now reduced to quiet, and the persecuted preacher pursued his labors with increased effect.[29] His health at last failed, and he returned to England. John M'Geary was subsequently sent by Wesley to occupy the vacant post. He found that the good work begun by Coughland had dwindled after his departure, and was nearly extinct. Some of the converts had gone to their eternal reward, others had backslidden, and only about fifteen females remained in the society.[30] He labored in Carbonear, but with such slight results that he was about to abandon the field in despair, when, in 1791, Black arrived from Nova Scotia. "I have been weeping before the Lord," exclaimed M'Geary to him; "I have been weeping before the Lord over my lonely situation and the darkness of the people, and your coming is like life from the dead." Black immediately began to preach in the town; an extraordinary revival ensued, and the mission was retrieved. His visit to

[29] Coke and Moore's Wesley, p. 478. [30] Richey's Memoir of Black, ch. 2.

the island is pronounced "the most useful and interesting portion of his missionary life.[31] Two hundred souls were converted during his stay at Conception Bay. He organized Methodism in the province, secured its church property, encouraged and fortified its classes, and obtained new laborers from Wesley. The people of Newfoundland had received him as a messenger from God, and dismissed him, at his return to Nova Scotia, with benedictions and tears. "I think," he says, "I never had so affecting a parting with any people before. It was hard work to tear away from them. I was nearly an hour shaking hands with them, some twice and thrice over, and even then we hardly knew how to part; but I at last rushed from among them and left them weeping as for an only son."

This apostle of Methodism in the eastern British provinces lived to see it generally and firmly established in those regions. He died in 1834, at the advanced age of seventy-four years, exclaiming, "God bless you! all is well!" and leaving in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland, 3 Methodist districts, 44 circuits, about 50 itinerant and many local preachers, with more than 6,000 members.

Still more remarkable circumstances attended the early history of Methodism in the West Indies.

On the twenty-fourth of September, 1786, Dr. Coke embarked with three missionaries, Hammett, Warrener, and Clark, for Nova Scotia. The voyage was tempestuous, the ship sprung a dangerous leak, and was so strained by a continual succession of storms, that at last the water began to enter at almost every joint. The sails were wasted by the weather; the ropes, beaten with winds and waves, were washed of their tar and became nearly white; the candles were almost all consumed, and the supply of water was so much reduced that the passengers were limited to a fixed allowance. The vessel, in fine, was nearly "half a wreck," and it seemed impossible for it to reach Halifax during the winter. The captain, a violent and superstitious man, at-

[31] Rev. Richard Knight, in Wesleyan Magazine, 1837, p. 487.

tributed these disasters to the Methodists on board, who had diligently preached and prayed among the passengers and crew. He walked the deck exclaiming, "There is a Jonah on board—a Jonah on board!" In a moment of violent passion he rushed into Coke's state-room and cast overboard his books and manuscripts. He seized also the doctor himself, whose small person could offer no very formidable resistance, and, with vociferous imprecations, threatened that if he was caught praying again on board he should be thrown into the sea after his books.[32] After beating about the ocean nearly two months and a half, a council was held, and the captain determined to steer as directly as possible for refuge in the West Indies, and in about three weeks more they arrived in the harbor of Antigua.[33] Coke, thus constrained out of his way, met, as he ascended the street of St. John's, Antigua, a man who was walking to a place of public worship, it being Christmas morning. This man was John Baxter, a ship carpenter. He had been a class-leader and local preacher in England, and had now under his care a Methodist society of no less than one thousand five hundred and sixty-nine members, all blacks except ten.[34] The weather-worn preacher went with him to the chapel, and preached. He was surprised with pleasure at the appearance of his black audience; it was one of the "cleanest" that he had ever seen; the colored Methodist women were uniformly appareled in white linen gowns, handkerchiefs and caps; the Gospel had evidently improved their external as well as their moral condition. The negroes had built the chapel by their own hard earnings. Religion had so far reformed their habits, that the old custom of maintaining military law during the Christmas holidays had been abandoned. On learning more about the islands, Coke concluded that the deviation from his route was providential, and made

[32] Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America. 12mo. London, 1793.

[33] History of the West India Islands, etc., by Thomas Coke, LL.D., vol. ii, chap. 33. (London, 1810.)

[34] Minutes of Wesleyan Conferences, vol. i, p. 187.

immediate arrangements for the settlement, in the West Indies, of all the missionaries who had accompanied him.

How came this remarkable collection of Methodists here on a distant and obscure isle of the tropics? To answer the question we must cast a glance back upon an interesting scene already noticed.[35]

On the 17th of January, 1758, twenty-eight years before this voyage of Coke, Wesley preached at Wandsworth, England. He was heard by an eminent West India planter, who was seeking health there—Nathaniel Gilbert, a lawyer, and Speaker of the House of Assembly in Antigua. The hearts of the planter and of two of his female slaves were touched by the word of the preacher. He baptized the two slaves, one of whom, he says, was the first regenerated African he had ever seen; and as he records the fact, he utters the prediction, since in such rapid process of fulfillment: "Shall not his saving health be made known to all nations?" Nathaniel Gilbert returned with his two slaves to Antigua in 1760, and became the founder of West India Methodism,—which has extended through all the British colonies of that archipelago, has become one of the chief means of their negro emancipation, has reached into Africa, and was, in fine, the beginning of all the plans of African evangelization subsequently prosecuted by the denomination.

Gilbert, on arriving at his home, began his religious labors by assembling a few persons at his own house, with whom he read the Scriptures and prayed. As usual with the Methodists of his day, it was not long before he stood up among them as an "exhorter," and at last found himself expounding and enforcing the word of God; in fine, he became a preacher. That a man of his position, with the dignity of Speaker of the legislative assembly, should take the character of a lay preacher, excited surprise; but that he should become a preacher to negroes excited contempt. He persevered, however, and founded a Methodist society of nearly two hundred members. He corresponded with

[35] See vol. i, p. 357.

Wesley, who sent him frequent counsels respecting the extraordinary work which was opening before him. At his death there seemed no one among his converts to take his place; but the society was saved from dissolution by the faithful labors of two female negroes, who held meetings for prayer among them every evening.[36]

In 1778, eighteen years after Gilbert began his religious labors, John Baxter was sent to Antigua, from the royal docks at Chatham, England, as a government shipwright. He found the remnants of Gilbert's society kept together by the two devoted colored women. He immediately began to preach to them, and in a short time his zealous labors were extended over the island. He became a true missionary, working at his craft by day and preaching by night; and in 1783, by his persevering exertions, the first Methodist chapel in the torrid zone was erected. Eight years after his arrival Coke and his three missionaries were cast by the winds of heaven upon the same shore, and forthwith began the celebrated "West India missions" of Methodism. Coke persuaded Baxter to give up his business, which afforded him a liberal salary, and to devote himself exclusively to evangelical labors. He did so with incredible success, and in our day the Antigua society reports two thousand three hundred and ten Methodists.[37]

Immediately Coke and his missionaries sailed from island to island, preaching, and founding societies; and they were continually reminded of the special providence which was so strangely directing them, by the discovery of scattered Wesleyans, from England and Ireland, who were at their command, to be formed into incipient Churches. At Dominica were two Methodist soldiers in the barracks, who, with two Moravian negroes, formed the first class; and to-day the society reports nearly eight hundred members. At Kingston, St. Vincent,

[36] It would be an interesting fact to know that these useful women were the same slaves who were baptized by Wesley, but I have not been able to verify that conjecture.

[37] Minutes of the Conference, 1858, p. 126. London.

they were received by a gentleman who, years before, had been converted under Gilbert's preaching at Antigua. Seven pious soldiers were also found in the town; they had been in the habit of meeting for prayer at five o'clock every morning, having erected a hut in the barracks for the purpose; six white inhabitants were combined with them by Coke in a class; the society now includes nearly eighteen hundred members. At St. Christopher they were received with general interest, and preached to great assemblies; it now comprises about thirty-five hundred Methodists. At St. Nevis no encouragement was given to the evangelists, but that island afterward received the truth from the more favorable mission points, and its society now includes more than eighteen hundred members.

St. Eustatius, under the control of the Dutch, was most inhospitable to the visitors; but even there, by a singular providence, Methodism was already planted, and was destined to afford a remarkable and affecting example of its tenacious, if not invincible vigor. As Coke and one of his preachers landed on its coast, they were addressed by two colored men, who inquired, with a cordiality unusual among strangers, "if they belonged to the brethren." The missionaries, supposing they referred to the Moravians, said no, but remarked that they belonged to the same great spiritual family. The hospitable negroes, however, had made no mistake. Coke learned that they had come to welcome him, having received word from the island of St. Christopher, that he designed to visit them. They were two of a number of free negroes who had actually hired a house for his accommodation, which they called his "home," and had also provided for the expenses of his journey. They conducted him to his new parsonage, where he was entertained with profuse hospitality.

Coke was surprised at this reception. No missionary had been there, and the island was destitute of the means of grace. These generous colored people were evidently devout men; his visit was received as that of an angel, and

yet there were mingled with their joy signs of a common and profound sorrow. With the utmost interest he inquired into their history. They informed him that, some months before, a slave, named Harry, was brought to the island from the United States, where he had been a member of a Methodist class. On arriving among them Harry found himself without a religious associate, and with no means of religious improvement but his private devotions. The poor African nevertheless maintained his fidelity to his Lord. After much anxiety and prayer he began publicly to proclaim to his fellow-servants the name of Christ. Such an example was a novelty on the island, and attracted much attention. His congregations were large; even the governor deigned to hear him, and, by approving his course, indirectly protected him from the opposition to which his servile condition would otherwise have exposed him.

God owned the labors of his humble servant, and at times the Holy Spirit descended in overwhelming influence upon the multitude of hearers. Such was the effect of his preaching on many of the slaves, that they fell like dead men to the earth, and lay insensible for hours. At a meeting not long before Coke's arrival, sixteen persons were thus struck down under the black apostle's exhortations. Such an extraordinary circumstance excited a general sensation among the planters. They determined to suppress the meetings. They appealed to the governor, who immediately ordered the slave before him, and forbade his preaching by severe penalties. So far had the planters succeeded in alarming this officer, that it was only by the intervention of the supreme judge that Harry was saved from being cruelly flogged. His faithful labors were now peremptorily stopped.

It was a remarkable coincidence that Coke arrived the very day on which Harry was silenced; hence the mingled joy and sorrow of the "little flock" who so hospitably entertained him.

After giving him this information, they insisted upon his preaching to them immediately, lest by delay the

opportunity should be lost; but fearing, from the silence which had that day been imposed on Harry, that it might result in more evil than good, he declined until he should see the governor. Such, however, was their hunger for the bread of life, that he could not induce them to separate till they had twice sung, and he had thrice joined with them in prayer.

He found, by his interview with the authorities, that it would be inexpedient to tarry on the island. He therefore formed the persecuted little band into classes under the most prudent men he could find among them, and, preaching a single sermon, committed them to God, and departed amid their tears and prayers for the United States. So amply had they supplied him with fruits and other provisions, that in a voyage of nearly three weeks, during which eight persons shared these bounties with him, they were not exhausted.

Harry, suspected and watched, did not presume to preach again; but supposing, after a considerable interval, that the excitement against him had ceased, and that the prohibition only applied to his preaching, he ventured to pray openly with his brethren. He was immediately summoned before the governor, and sentenced to be publicly whipped, to be imprisoned, and afterward to be banished from the island. The sentence was executed with relentless cruelty, but the poor negro felt himself honored in suffering for his Master. While the blood streamed from his back, his Christian fortitude was unshaken. From the whipping-post he was taken to prison, whence he was secretly removed, but whither none of his brethren could discover.

In 1788 Coke returned to the West Indies. After preaching at many other islands, he again visited St. Eustatius to comfort its suffering society. The spirit of persecution still raged there, and the fate of Harry was still an impenetrable mystery. None of his associates had been able to obtain the slightest information respecting him since his disappearance; nor did they expect to be able to learn his fate till the sea should give up its dead. A cruel edict had

been passed by the local government, inflicting thirty-nine lashes on any colored man who should be found praying. It seemed the determination of the authorities to extinguish religion on the island; yet the seed sown by Harry had sprung up, and nothing could uproot it. During all these trials the little society of St. Eustatius had been growing; its persecuted members had contrived, by some means, to preserve their union, and Coke found them two hundred and fifty-eight strong, and privately baptized many before his departure; they had been, indeed, "hid with Christ in God." The government again drove him from the island.

After visiting the United States and England, this tireless man of God was, in 1790, again "sounding the alarm" among the West India Islands; many new missions were opened; and again he visited St. Eustatius. A new governor had been appointed, and he hoped for a better reception, but he was repelled as obstinately as before. Still the great Shepherd took care of the flock. The rigor of the laws against them had been somewhat relaxed, and, in the providence of God, eight exhorters had arisen among them, who were extensively useful to the slaves. To these exhorters and to the class-leaders Coke gave private advice and comfort, and committing them to God, who had hitherto so marvelously kept them, he again departed. The chief care of the society devolved on a person who, about four years previously, had been converted under the labors of black Harry Harry's fate was still involved in mystery; but his "works followed him;" he had kindled a fire in St. Eustatius which many waters could not quench. On his return to England Coke interested the Wesleyan Churches in his behalf, and "many thousands were the prayers," he writes, "which ascended for him and the afflicted Church which he had planted."

In 1792 the indefatigable evangelist again visited the island, but he was not allowed to preach. Nothing was yet known of the fate of Harry. The spirit of persecution still prevailed, and even feeble women had been dragged to the whipping-post for having met for prayer. But, in the good providence

of God, religion still prospered secretly, and the classes met by stealth. It seemed indeed that the inextinguishable spirit of the primitive Christians had found a lodgment among these oppressed Africans, as in the catacombs of Rome. Coke left them with a determination to go to Holland and solicit the interposition of the parent government. This he did with his usual perseverance, but not with success. The tyranny of the local government continued about twelve years longer; but the great Head of the Church at last sent deliverance to his people. In 1804, about eighteen years after Harry was silenced, a missionary was admitted to the island; a chapel was afterward built and Sunday schools established, and St. Eustatius has since continued to be named among the successful missions of the West Indies. Coke lived to see this long-closed door opened, and the devoted missionary enter with the bread of life for the famishing but faithful band of disciples. It reports in our day nearly three hundred members in its society.

But what became of Harry? During about ten years his fate was unknown, and his brethren suffered the worst apprehensions respecting it. About the end of this period Coke again visited the United States. One evening, after preaching, he was followed to his room by a colored man, deeply affected. It was black Harry of St. Eustatius. An enviable privilege would it doubtless have been to have witnessed that interview. He had been sent in a cargo of slaves to the States, but was now free. Through all these years and changes he had "kept the faith," and was still using his humble talents with usefulness among his oppressed people.

In his repeated visits to the West Indies, Coke extended his missions rapidly from island to island. At his second voyage (1788) he landed at Barbadoes; the ship's crew, among whom he had preached faithfully on the passage, bade him and his missionaries adieu, with tears, and gave them three cheers as the small boat left for the shore. The visitors knew no one on shore, but here also there were soldiers who

had attended Methodist preaching in Ireland; a serjeant recognized one of the missionaries as his old circuit pastor, and threw his arms around the evangelist's neck with delight. The good officer and a few of his Methodist comrades had been holding public religious service, in a ware house, exhorting and praying with the islanders. A merchant invited the visitors to dine with him, and Coke was surprised to find that he had been one of his hearers in the United States, where he had baptized four of the hospitable man's negroes. Pearce, one of the missionaries, was left on the island and Methodism was effectually founded there. It now reports two circuits, six missionaries, and three thousand four hundred and forty-five members.

Leaving missionaries on the islands of Saba and Santa Cruz, Coke went alone to Jamaica, where, notwithstanding some insults from drunken "gentlemen," he met with such a cordial reception that he could not doubt the final success of his mission. He was not disappointed; Jamaica now enrolls twenty-eight missionaries and more than seventeen thousand Methodists.

On his return to England after this voyage his reports created universal interest. He was authorized by the Conference to collect funds for the support of the missions, and devoted sixteen months to the purpose, preaching for them and begging money from house to house among the Methodists; and such was his zeal that few men who came in his way escaped his appeals.[38] He thus virtually began the Wesleyan Missionary Society, which for many years was embodied in his own person, and has, since his death, become the most successful missionary institution of the Protestant world.

[38] Drew (Life of Coke) gives an example of his success. A captain in the navy, from whom he obtained a subscription, calling upon a friend of Coke, the same day, asked, "Do you know anything of a little fellow who calls himself Dr. Coke, and who is going about taking money for missionaries to be sent among the slaves?" "I know him very well," was the reply. "He seems," rejoined the captain, "to be a heavenly-minded little devil. He coaxed me out of two guineas this morning."

On his third visit to the West Indies (in 1790) he found that a chapel, accommodating seven hundred hearers, had been erected at Barbadoes; but the success of the mission was attended by the trials which had been common to Methodism in other parts of the world. The Methodists were called "Hallelujahs," and were hooted by that nickname in the streets. They had to appeal to the magistrates for protection from the violence of the mob. Baxter, who, with his devoted wife, attempted to civilize the savage Caribs of St. Vincent, had been defeated, and was compelled to leave their mountain wilderness by the machinations of French priests, who had spread among them the report that the Methodists were conspirators, preparing the way for the conquest and slaughter of the tribe. Not long afterward the chapel at St. Vincent was broken into, at night, by rioters, and, besides other acts of sacrilege, the Bible was borne away and attached to the town gibbit. The success of the missionary at Kingston, Jamaica, where a chapel had been erected, provoked popular hostility; he was repeatedly attacked by the mob and his life endangered; the leading layman of his charge was stoned almost to death, and was under the necessity of disguising himself as a soldier; the chapel was in danger of destruction, and had to be guarded. Persecution also broke out in Antigua. Men of the higher class, but drunk, threatened to murder Baxter; they assailed him at the chapel door, and the whole town was thrown into excitement by the alarm and a cry of fire which arose from it.

On the island of Grenada Coke found Methodism already successfully planted by a free mulatto, who had removed thither from Antigua, and had formed a class of twenty members, which has grown by our day into a society of more than six hundred. At Montserrat, St. Christopher, and Nevis he met also with increased encouragement.

By the time of Wesley's death Methodism had thus not only been introduced, but successfully tested by its usual trials, in most of the British West India islands. Not merely those mentioned, but the Bahamas, Hayti, and even

the distant Bermudas, became the scenes of extraordinary labors, sometimes of severe persecutions from the local governments, and of martyr-like self-sacrifice by the English missionaries, who perished by shipwreck or by the pestilences of the climate—and finally scenes of emancipation and civilization, which form some of the most striking passages in the history of modern Christianity.

Such has been the success of Methodism in this interesting field that in our day the West Indies report five districts, forty-eight circuits or stations, nearly a hundred missionaries, besides local preachers and exhorters, and nearly fifty thousand church members.

This extraordinary mission work will again claim our attention in connection with some of the most important events of the later history of Methodism. To the eyes of the dying Wesley it appeared like a sublime vision coming down from heaven on the distant sea, and when he was closing his remarkable career, wondering with grateful astonishment at the outspread of his cause, twelve of his "helpers" were bearing the divine light among these islands, and reported five thousand six hundred and forty-five members in their societies.[39] While he was dying, the great Methodist work of African evangelization, so remarkably begun, was extending to the African continent, and in the next year after his death Sierra Leone reported two hundred and twenty-three converted negroes. It was the first of those Wesleyan societies which now dot the western, southern, and southeastern coasts, and gleam like points of light far into the interior of that benighted continent, presenting the cheering spectacle of sixty-eight mission stations, with more than eighty evangelists, besides numerous local preachers and exhorters, and about fifteen thousand converts.

But let us turn again to the great, the providential man who was the chief agent of this beneficent and marvelous work. He still lingers amid its surprising triumphs, but the time of his departure is at hand.

[39] Minutes of Wesleyan Conferences, vol. i, pp. 240, 244.

CHAPTER XII.

LAST DAYS, DEATH, AND CHARACTER OF WESLEY.

Wesley in his eighty-eighth Year — His last Signature to the Minutes — His last Travels — The last Entry in his Journal — His last Letter to America — His last Sermon — His Death — Number of his Sermons — His Burial — His Character — The Completeness of his Life — The Variety of his Labors — His Attention to Details — His Travels — His Writings — His Learning — His Temperament — The Problem of his Power as a Preacher — His military Coolness and Courage — Examples — His Humor — His Rebukes and Repartees — His Catholic Spirit — Liberal Terms of Admission to his Societies — He publishes the Life of a Unitarian as an Example for his People — His liberal Opinions of Montanus, Pelagius, and Arminius — Did he belong to the highest Class of Great Men? — Relative Greatness of Speculative and Practical Men — Wesley as a Legislator — Repose of his Character — An Example — His Credulity — His Ambition — His Piety — The Influence of Methodism on morbid Minds — Wesley's Sensibility — A romantic Incident — Grace Murray.

Wesley presided in his Conference, for the last time, at Bristol, in the summer of 1790. He was then in the eighty-eighth year of his age. His sight was so dim that he could not read the hymns in public worship; his limbs were too weak to ascend the pulpit or to walk the streets, without support; his memory was too feeble to recall readily the divisions of his sermons, so that his traveling companion had sometimes to stand by his side in the desk, and state them to him at the right moment, and yet the tottering evangelist pursued his course of daily travel and daily preaching. Extraordinary tenacity of life and labor! If the world has ever afforded a parallel instance, it has at least done itself the injustice of failing to record it. On his last birth-day he wrote, as we have seen, that no glasses could aid his failing eyes; that his "strength was quite gone;" that "nature was exhausted;" but that he still "felt no pain from head to foot."[1]

[1] Journal, June 28, 1790, Works, vol. iv.

It is said, however, by those who saw him, that his eye was still bright and piercing, notwithstanding his failing vision, and his countenance peculiarly placid and benignant. He was gazed at in the streets with veneration, and his simple reply to the salutations of the crowds, who gathered about him as he passed, was in the words of the oldest of the apostles, whom he now so much resembled: "Little children, love one another."[2] The entries in his Journal are now less frequent than ever; he makes no note of his last Conference, none indeed of any event after the fourth day of the month in which it was held till the twenty-seventh of the next month.[3] His hand trembled too much to write.

About the middle of 1790 he ceased to record his receipts and expenditures in his cash account book. Its last sentence is striking, both by its sentiment and its appearance:[4] "For upward of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly: I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can and give all I can; that is, all I have." It is scarcely legible, and the error in the number of years given, is proof of the failure of his faculties.

His last signature to the Minutes of the Conference shows that his hand had forgot "its cunning;" the final letter is nearly two inches above the first; the W is placed over the n, and the last syllable of his surname over the first. It has been engraved, and circulated among his people as a precious autograph; a scrawl which records volumes of meaning.

Precisely a month and a day after the commencement of his last Conference in Bristol, he again arrives in that city, (August 27, 1790,) so notable in his own history; he holds an evening meeting and continues it till midnight, as a

[2] Rev. W. W. Stamp, in Wesleyan Magazine, 1834, p. 106.

[3] It is not certain, however, how much of the manuscript was given by the transcribers.

[4] See engraved autographs in this volume.

"Watchnight;" two days later he performs alone a service of three hours' duration, reading prayers, preaching, and administering the Lord's Supper; and the same day he preaches in the open air, "the hearts of the people bowing down before the Lord" under his word. The next day he is again on his route, preaching twice in different towns; in the evening to a crowd within the chapel, and a multitude without, who hear through the open windows. The following day he again preaches twice elsewhere, and thus he proceeds from day to day, with apparently but few intermissions; visiting again his favorite field of Cornwall; London, and its neighboring regions; and the Isle of Wight, whose "poor, plain, artless society" delights him, and gives him assurance that "here at least we have not lost our labor;" though he expected not that from these poor and artless people was soon to arise, above the horizon of the Christian world, that humble but benign light which has since become a conspicuous star to the eyes of Protestant Christendom, and has shed its modest ray upon the paths of millions of the "poor and artless," teaching them, by one of the best and most beautiful of human examples, how to live and how to die.[5]

He returns often to Bristol, where he yet attempts to preach at five o'clock in the morning, notwithstanding the increasing fever of his mouth at that early hour. Companies of his brethren come out to conduct him into London as he approaches the city; they pause with him an hour in the "lovely walks" of the gardens at Cobham; he still delights in such scenes, but is too near the spiritual world to feel his former interest in them. "The eye," he says, "was not satisfied with seeing; an immortal spirit can be satisfied with nothing but seeing God." He stays but a few days in the metropolis, and next appears "under a large tree" in "ancient Winchelsea, calling to most of the inhabitants of the town: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent and believe the Gospel.'" *It is his last out-door sermon.* He hastens on

[5] See page 342.

to Rye, "where the word did not fall to the ground;" again to London; then to Colchester, where "a wonderful congregation of rich and poor, clergy and laity," crowd around him; to Norwich, the former scene of persecution and strife to his people, but where now "wonderfully had the tide turned, and he had become an honorable man;" to Yarmouth, where the multitude of hearers throng without as well as within the house; to Norwich again, where he preaches two sermons and administers the communion on the same day; to Lynn, where he arrives wet and chilled "from head to foot" with the rain, but preaches nevertheless, "soon forgetting this little inconvenience" in the earnest interest of his congregation, and where, the next day, all the clergymen of the town, except one who is lame, are present to hear him. He returns again to London; he has now freer admission there than ever to the national churches; and his Journals, containing the most extraordinary record of a human life, in the possession of mankind, end on Sunday, the 24th of October, 1790, with a notice of his preaching one entire Sabbath in pulpits of the Establishment, of which he was at once the greatest honor and the greatest victim of the last century. In the morning he exhorts the Spitalfield's Church to "put on the whole armor of God;" in the afternoon, at St. Paul's, Hadwell, he warns a great throng that "one thing is needful."

But though the record of his labors ends, the labors themselves still go on for some months. He continues to preach in his chapels in London, usually meeting the society, after the sermon, in each "appointment," and—giving them his farewell counsel, "to love as brethren, to fear God, and to honor the king"—he sings with them at parting his accustomed hymn, praying in its triumphant strain that he might "cease at once to work and live."[6] He even prepares to undertake, at the usual time of the year, another journey to Ireland and Scotland; his chaise and horses are sent before

[6] It is one of Charles Wesley's finest hymns—"Shrinking from the cold hand of death," etc.—1066, American Methodist Collection.

him to Bristol, and seats engaged for himself and his traveling companion in the Bath coach; but the energy of his mind can no longer sustain his sinking body, and the design is abandoned.[7]

On the first of February he writes his last letter to America.[8] "See that you never give place to one thought of separating from your brethren in Europe," he says; "lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that *the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue.*"

On the 17th he preached at Lambeth, and returned feverish with a cold. He seems to have read aright the premonition, for the next day he preached at Chelsea from the words: "The King's business requires haste." He was obliged to pause at intervals in the discourse, and explain to his hearers that such an unusual claim on their indulgence was rendered necessary by his indisposition.

On the 19th he pursued his usual in-door business, though evidently becoming worse; at dinner he requested a friend to read to him four chapters of the book of Job, from the fourth to the seventh.

On the 20th, the Sabbath, he rose at his accustomed hour of four o'clock, but could not attempt his accustomed labors. He slept much during the day, and two of his own discourses on the Sermon on the Mount were read to him. On Monday his strength rallied, and he made an excursion to Twickenham; on Tuesday evening he preached in City Road Chapel his last sermon there.

On Wednesday the 23d, at Leatherhead, he discoursed on the text: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." *It was his last sermon.* On that day fell from his dying grasp a trumpet of the truth which had sounded the everlasting Gospel oftener, and more effectually, than that of any other man

[7] Memoir prefixed to the collected edition of his Works, by Rev. Joseph Benson. London, 1816.

[8] To Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, Works, vol. vii, p. 237.

for sixteen hundred years. The Reformers of Germany, Switzerland, France, and England wrought their great work more by the pen than by the voice. It has been admitted that Whitefield preached more eloquently, with few exceptions to larger assemblies, and traveled more extensively (though not more miles) than Wesley, within the same limits of time; but Wesley survived him more than twenty years, and his power has been more productive and permanent. Whitefield preached eighteen thousand sermons, more than ten a week for his thirty-four years of ministerial life. Wesley preached forty-two thousand four hundred, after his return from Georgia, more than fifteen a week. His public life, ending on the 23d of February, 1791, stands out in the history of the world unquestionably pre-eminent in religious labors above that of any other man since the apostolic age.

On Saturday the 26th he wrote his final letter. It was addressed to Wilberforce, and was an exhortation to perseverance in his parliamentary labors against the African slave-trade.[9] By his "Thoughts upon Slavery" he had pledged himself to that great reform at its beginning under Clarkson and Sharpe, before Wilberforce's election to Parliament by the county of York.

The closing scenes of his life were worthy of its pure and beneficent history.

On the Sunday morning after his last sermon he rose with apparently improved health, and, sitting in his chair, with his habitual cheerfulness quoted from his brother's hymn, entitled "Forsake me not when my strength faileth," the stanza,

> "Till glad I lay this body down
> Thy servant, Lord, attend;
> And O, my life of mercy crown
> With a triumphant end!"

Death was a welcome rest to him, and immediately after he had concluded the hymn he uttered, with peculiar emphasis,

[9] Letter 85, Works, vol. vii. See also Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i, p. 716.

the words of Christ: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." He attempted to converse, but was quickly exhausted, and was obliged to lie upon his bed. The group of friends around him knelt in prayer; he responded the amen with unusual fervor. Soon after he exclaimed: "There is no need for more than what I said at Bristol; my words then were:

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'[10]

"Is this the present language of your heart?" asked one of his friends, "and do you now feel as you did then?" "Yes," he replied. "'Tis enough," rejoined his friend; "He, our precious Immanuel, has purchased, has promised all." "He is all! he is all! I will go!" responded the dying man.

The evening came on. "How necessary is it," he exclaimed, "for every one to be on the right foundation:

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'

We must be justified by faith and then go on to full sanctification."

The next day he was lethargic. "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus," he said in a low but distinct voice. Shaking off the languor of disease, he repeated, three or four times, during the day: "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." On

[10] "At the Bristol Conference, in the year 1783, Mr. Wesley was taken very ill; neither he nor his friends thought he would recover. He said to Mr. Bradford: 'I have been reflecting on my past life; I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavoring, in my poor way, to do a little good to my fellow-creatures; and now it is probable that there are but a few steps between me and death; and what have I to trust to for salvation? I can see nothing which I have done or suffered that will bear looking at. I have no other plea than this:

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."'

"The sentiment here expressed, and his reference to it in his last sickness, plainly show how steadily he had persevered in the same views of the Gospel with which he set out to preach it." Moore's Life of Wesley book viii, chap. 4.

Tuesday, the first of March, he sank rapidly, but he was to depart, as so many thousands of his lowliest followers had, with "singing and shouting." He began the day by singing one of his brother's lyrics:

"All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored;
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear, our omnipotent Lord;
Who, meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race,
Once more to thy people return,
And reign in thy kingdom of grace.

"O wouldst thou again be made known,
Again in thy Spirit descend;
And set up, in each of thine own,
A kingdom that never shall end!
Thou only art able to bless,
And make the glad nations obey,
And bid the dire enmity cease,
And bow the whole world to thy sway."

His voice failed at the end of the second stanza. He asked for pen and ink, but could not write. An attendant, taking the pen from him, asked, "What shall I write?" "Nothing," replied the dying patriarch, "but *that God is with us.*" During the forenoon he again surprised his mourning friends by singing the rapturous hymn:

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures."

Still later he seemed to summon his remaining strength to speak, but could only say in broken accents, "Nature is—nature is"—One of his attendants added, "nearly exhausted; but you are entering into a new nature, and into the society of blessed spirits." "Certainly," he responded, clasping his hands and exclaiming "Jesus!" But his voice failed, and though his lips continued to move, his meaning could not be understood.

He was placed in his chair, but seemed suddenly struck with death. With a failing voice he prayed aloud: "Lord, thou givest strength to those that speak and to those that cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that thou loosest the tongue." Raising his voice, he sung two lines of the Doxology:

"To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree—"

But he could proceed no further. "Now we have done, let us all go," he added. The ruling passion was strong in death; he evidently supposed himself dismissing one of his assemblies.

He was again laid upon his bed, to rise no more. After a short sleep he called all present to offer prayer and praise. They knelt around him, and, says one of them, "the room seemed filled with the Divine presence."[11] A second time they knelt in like manner, and his fervent responses showed that he was yet able to share in their devotions. He uttered an emphatic amen to a part of the prayer which alluded to the perpetuation and universal spread of the doctrine and discipline to which he had devoted his life. When they rose from their kness he took leave of each, grasping their hands and saying, "Farewell! Farewell!"

Soon after another visitor entered the chamber; Wesley attempted to speak, but observing that he could not be understood, he paused, and collecting all his strength, exclaimed, "The best of all is, God is with us." And then, says a witness of the scene, "lifting up his dying arms in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph, not to be expressed," he again cried out, "The best of all is, God is with us."[12] "Who are these?" he asked, noticing a group of persons at his bedside. "Sir," replied Rogers, who, with his wife, Hester Ann Rogers, ministered to him in his last hours, "Sir, we are come to rejoice with you; you are going to receive your crown." "It is the Lord's

[11] Henry Moore, Life of Wesley, book viii, chap. 4.

[12] This phrase has been adopted as a motto on the seal of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.

doing," he replied, "and marvelous in our eyes." On being informed that the widow of Charles Wesley was come, he said, in allusion to his deceased brother, "He giveth his servants rest." He thanked her, as she pressed his hand, and affectionately endeavored to kiss her. As they wet his lips, he said, "We thank thee, O Lord, for these and all thy mercies: bless the Church and king; and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever!" It was his usual thanksgiving after meals.

"He causeth his servants to lie down in peace;" "The clouds drop fatness;" "The Lord is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!"—such were some of his broken but rapturous ejaculations in these last hours. Again he summoned the company to prayer at his bedside; the chamber had become not merely a sanctuary, it seemed the gate of heaven; he joined in the service with increased fervor; during the night he attempted frequently to repeat the hymn of Watts, which he had sung the preceding day, but could only utter,

"I'll praise—I'll praise—"

The next morning the sublime scene closed. Joseph Bradford, long his ministerial traveling companion, the sharer of his trials and success, prayed with him. "Farewell!" was the last word and benediction of the dying apostle.

While many of his old friends, preachers and others, were prostrate in prayer around him, without a struggle or a sigh, his spirit took its flight, and the unparalleled career of John Wesley was ended.

He had requested in his will that six poor men should bear his corpse to the grave, and should be rewarded with twenty shillings each. He directed that there should be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of those who loved him, and were following him to heaven. "I solemnly adjure my executors," he wrote, "punctually to observe this." While dying he said, "Let me be buried in nothing but what is woollen; and let my corpse be carried, in my coffin, into the chapel."

The day before his burial he lay in state in the City Road Chapel, dressed in his gown, cassock, and band. His countenance is described as singularly placid, wearing "a heavenly smile, a beauty which was admired by all who saw it."[13] Great throngs flocked to see for the last time his venerable features, and it was deemed necessary to inter him by torchlight in the morning, in order to prevent accidents from the crowd. Many spectators however were present; and when the preacher who read the burial service reached the passage which says, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself the soul of our *brother*," and substituted the word "father," the throng was so deeply affected that from silent tears they broke out into loud weeping.

The life of such a man is best characterized by his deeds, and they have been amply narrated in these pages; yet at the conclusion of a career so extraordinary, both writer and reader are irresistibly detained by questions which will not be appeased without some further answer. What is the explanation of this anomalous life? What were the attributes of this marvelous man's character? Whence was his power?

Contemplated in almost any one of its phases, the life of Wesley appears unusual, if not great; but considered as a whole, its symmetrical completeness is almost a peculiarity in the history of great men; for how seldom do we find, in the biographies of such men, that any great life-plan has been conclusively achieved; achieved in such manner as to complete their own anticipations, and not to leave to the precarious agency of their successors the task of fulfilling their

[13] Hester Ann Rogers, who was present throughout the last scene, writes: "The solemnity of the dying hour of that great and good man I believe will be ever written on my heart. A cloud of the divine presence rested on all; and while he could hardly be said to be an inhabitant of earth, being now speechless, and his eyes fixed, victory and glory were written on his countenance, and quivering, as it were, on his dying lips. No language can paint what appeared in that face! The more we gazed upon it, the more we saw of heaven unspeakable!" Memoir of Mrs. Rogers, p. 73.

designs or repairing their failures? Wesley not only saw the initiation of the Methodistic movement, but also conducted it through the successive and critical gradations of its development, and lived to see it at last an organic, a settled and permanent system, in the Old World and in the New, with a thoroughly organized ministry, a well-defined and well-defended theology, the richest psalmody then known to English Protestantism, a considerable literature, not of the highest order, but therefore the better adapted to his numerous people, and a scheme of ecclesiastical discipline which time has proved to be the most effective known beyond the limits of the Papal Church. By his episcopal organization of his American Societies, and the legal settlement of his English Conference, he saw his great plan in a sense completed; it could be committed to the contingencies of the future to work out its appointed functions; and, after those two great events he was permitted to live long enough to control any incidental disturbances that might attend their first operations, and to pass through a healthful, serene conclusion of his long life—a life which the philosopher must pronounce singularly successful and fortunate, the Christian singularly providential. He not only outlived all the various uncertainties of his great work, he outlived the prolonged and fierce hostilities which had assailed it, and the suspicions and slanders which had been rife against himself personally,[14] and died at last universally venerated, without

[14] Some qualification is necessary to this remark. Soon after Wesley's death "An Impartial Review of his Life and Writings" was published in London, containing forged "love-letters," etc., said to have been written by him in his eighty-first year. The pamphlet was addressed to Dr. Coke. In 1801 a Mr. J. Collet, smitten with remorse, wrote to Coke acknowledging that the letters and most of the alleged facts of the publication were fictions written by himself. (Drew's Coke, chap. 14.) The famous bookseller James Lackington, (Memoirs, chap. 31,) published also some infamous charges against Wesley, from a pamphlet entitled, "A Letter to Rev. T. Coke, LL.D., by an old Member of the Society." Lackington, who had been a Methodist, and had made a fortune in his business by the aid of a fund which Wesley had established at City Road for the assistance of poor business men, became an infidel. He lived however to repent, and to show that the pamphlet from which he had quoted was fictitious. See

pain, without disease, in his bed at his own home, at the head-quarters of his successful cause, and with the prayers and benedictions of the second and third generations of his people.

And this life, so fortunate in its rare completeness, was still more remarkable for its manifold character. Wesley seemed to be conducting at once the usual lives of three or four men, if indeed the word usual can be applied to any one department of his life. In either his literary labors or his travels, his functions as an ecclesiastical legislator and administrator, or his labors as an evangelist or preacher, he has seldom been surpassed; and a historian of Methodism hardly makes a questionable assertion, when he affirms that a man of more extraordinary character probably never lived upon this earth; that his travels, his studies, or his ministerial labors were each more than sufficient for any ordinary man; that few men could have endured to travel so much as he did, without either preaching, writing, or reading; that few could have endured to preach as often as he did, supposing they had neither traveled nor written books; and that very few men could have written and published so many books as he did, though they had always avoided both preaching and traveling.[15]

He possessed in an eminent degree one trait of a master mind—the power of comprehending and managing at once the outlines and the details of plans. It is this power which forms the philosophical genius in science; it is essential to the successful commander and the great statesman. It is illustrated in the whole economical system of Methodism—a system which, while it fixes itself to the smallest locality with the utmost tenacity, is sufficiently general in its pro-

his "Confessions." Both these famous works must be classed, with Dunton's Life and Errors, among the curiosities of Methodist bibliography. Both authors are favorites with bibliomaniacs. The best edition of Lackington's Memoirs is that of Whitaker, Treacher, & Arnot. London, 1830. It contains a large part of the Confessions.

[15] Crowther's Portraiture of Methodism, chap. 1, p. 72.

visions to reach the ends of the world, and still maintain its unity of spirit and discipline.

No man knew better than Wesley the importance of small things. His whole financial system was based on weekly penny collections; and it was a rule of himself and his preachers never to omit a single preaching appointment, except from invincible necessity. He was the first to apply extensively the plan of tract distribution. He wrote, printed, and scattered over the kingdom, pamphlets and placards on almost every topic of morals and religion. In addition to the usual services of the Church, he introduced the band-meeting, the class-meeting, the prayer-meeting, the love-feast, the watch-night, the quarterly meeting, and the annual conference. Not content with his itinerant laborers, he called into use the less available powers of his people, by establishing the departments of local preachers, exhorters, and leaders. It was, in fine, by gathering together fragments, by combining minutiæ, that he formed that powerful system of spiritual means which is transcending all others in the evangelization of the world. Equally minute was he in his personal habits. Moore, his biographer and companion at City Road, says that the utmost neatness and simplicity were manifest in every circumstance of his life; that in his chamber and study, during his winter months of residence in London, not a book was misplaced, or even a scrap of paper left unheeded; that he could enjoy every convenience of life and yet acted in the smallest things like a man who was not to continue an hour in one place; that he appeared at home in every place, settled, satisfied, and happy, and yet was ready any hour to take a journey of a thousand miles.

It was not only in the theoretical construction of plans that Wesley excelled, if indeed he paused at all to theorize about plans, but he was pre-eminently distinguished by the practical energy with which he prosecuted the great variety of his labors. Their history would be absolutely incredible with less authentic evidence than that which attests it. He was perpetually traveling and preaching, studying and writing,

translating and abridging, superintending his societies, and applying his great conceptions. He traveled usually four thousand five hundred miles a year, and, as we have seen, this "itineracy," at the rate of more than the circumference of the globe every six years, was pursued on horseback down to nearly his seventieth year—preaching two, three, and sometimes four sermons a day, commencing at five o'clock in the morning; and in all this incessant traveling and preaching he carried with him the studious and meditative habits of the philosopher. Scarcely a department of literary or scientific inquiry escaped his attention.

Like Luther, he knew the importance of the press; he kept it teeming with his publications, and his itinerant preachers were good agents for their circulation. His works, including abridgements and translations, amounted to about two hundred volumes. These comprise treatises on almost every subject of divinity, on poetry, music, history, and natural, moral, metaphysical, and political philosophy. He wrote, as he preached, *ad populum;* and we shall hereafter see that he was not only the original leader, but the author of those plans which have become a characteristic of our times for the popular diffusion of knowledge.

Unlike most men who are given to various exertions and many plans, he was accurate and profound. He was an adept in classical literature and the use of the classical tongues; his writings are adorned with their finest passages. He was familiar with a number of modern languages; his own style is one of the best examples of strength and perspicuity among English writers. He seems to have been ready on almost every subject of learning and general literature; and as a logician, he was remarkably acute, and decisive.

He was but little addicted to those vicissitudes of temper which characterize imaginative minds. His temperament was warm, but not fiery. His intellect never appears inflamed, but always glowing—a serene radiance. His immense labors were accomplished, not by the im-

pulses of restless enthusiasm, but by the cool calculation of his plans, and the steady self-possession with which he pursued them. He habitually exemplified his favorite maxim: "Always in haste, but never in a hurry." "I have not time to be in a hurry," he said. He was as economical of his time as a miser could be of his gold; rising at four o'clock in the morning, and allotting to every hour its appropriate work. "Leisure and I have taken leave of each other," he wrote. Fletcher said of him: "Though oppressed with the weight of near seventy years, and the care of near thirty thousand souls, he shames still, by his unabated zeal and immense labors, all the young ministers of England, perhaps of Christendom. He has generally blown the Gospel trump, and rode twenty miles, before most of the professors who despise his labors have left their downy pillows. As he begins the day, the week, the year, so he concludes them, still intent upon extensive services for the glory of the Redeemer and the good of souls." Such, however, was the happy distribution of his time, that, amid a multiplicity of engagements which would distract an ordinary man, he declares there were few persons who spent so many hours in studious solitude as himself. And it has justly been remarked, that one wonder of his character was the self-control by which he preserved himself calm, while he kept all in excitement around him.

Like most great men who have reached old age, Wesley was careful in his physical habits. Though of feeble constitution, his regularity, sustained through such great exertions and vicissitudes, produced a vigor and equanimity which are seldom the accompaniments of a laborious mind or of a distracted life. And often did he declare, as we have seen, that he had not felt lowness of spirits one quarter of an hour since he was born—that ten thousand cares were no more weight to his mind than ten thousand hairs to his head, and that he never lost a night's sleep in his life before his seventieth year.

One of the finest spectacles in human life is the sight of

an old man sustaining his career of action or endurance, to the last, with an unwavering spirit. Such was Wesley. He sought no repose from his labors till death. Activity was the normal condition of happiness to him, as it must be to all healthful minds. After the eightieth year of his age he visited Holland twice. At the end of his eighty-second we have seen him recording, "I am never tired with writing, preaching, or traveling." The scene of his preaching under trees which he had planted himself, at Kingswood, and when most of his old disciples there were dead, and their children's children surrounded him, has perhaps no parallel in history. He outlived most of his first preachers, and stood up, mighty in intellect and labors, among the second and third generations of his people; and it is affecting to trace him through his latter years, when persecution had subsided, and he was everywhere received as a patriarch, sometimes exciting, by his arrival in towns and cities, an interest such as the king himself would produce. He attracted the largest assemblies which have been congregated for religious instruction in modern ages, being estimated sometimes at more than thirty thousand. Great intellectually, morally, and physically, when at length he died, in the eighty-eighth year of his age and sixty-fifth of his ministry, he was unquestionably one of the most extraordinary men of history.

He lived to see Methodism spread through Great Britain, America, and the West India Islands. Hundreds of traveling and thousands of local preachers, and tens of thousands of followers, were connected with him at his death. And how have they multiplied since? Though there are men still living who heard him preach, yet the epitaph of Sir Christopher Wren, in St. Paul's Cathedral, the work of his own genius, is already applicable to Wesley's memory in almost all the Protestant world: "Do you ask for his monument? Look around you."

Such was the life of Wesley in its outlines; a minute examination of his traits can only confirm these more striking characteristics.

As a preacher he remains a problem to us. It is at least very difficult to explain, at this remote day, the secret of his great power in the pulpit, aside from the divine influence which is pledged to all faithful ministers. Whitefield may be considered the chief model, if not the founder, of that popular and powerful hortatory preaching which, since his day, has been characteristic of Methodism, and which still thunders along its great American circuits, and shakes the vast multitudes of its assemblies in the wilderness and in its camp-meetings. Charles Wesley, Fletcher, and many others of the early Methodist preachers, were good examples of it; men of emotion, of passion, tears, and native eloquence. Wesley, perspicuous, logical, peculiarly self-possessed and calm, was nevertheless more powerful than any of them in the influence of his discourses on both the sensibilities and the understandings of his hearers. The marvelous physical effects which attended the first Methodist preaching began earlier, as we have seen, and were more frequent, under his discourses than under Whitefield's. They continued, more or less, till the end of his career. There must have been some peculiar power in his address which the records of the times have failed to describe; something more than what we can infer from the descriptions of those who heard him, and who tell us that his attitude in the pulpit was graceful and easy; his action calm and natural, yet pleasing and expressive; his voice not loud, but clear, agreeable, and masculine; and his style neat and perspicuous.[16]

The obviously great character of the man, and the prestige of his singular career, doubtless gave authority to his word, so that his hearers felt as did Beattie, who heard him at Aberdeen, and who remarked, after one of his ordinary discourses, that "it was not a masterly sermon, yet none but a master could have preached it;" but before he had any such prestige his calm power in the pulpit was as great as at any later period. The stoutest hearts quailed before

[16] Crowther's Portraiture of Methodism, p. 68.

him; the most hardened men sank to the earth overwhelmed; infuriated mobs retreated, or oftener yielded, acknowledging the magic of his word; and their leaders, shouting in his defense above the din of the tumult, conducted him in safety and triumph to his lodgings. There was a trait of military coolness and command in his manner, at times, which reminds us of his namesake, the greatest captain of his country. It is doubtful whether, like Whitefield or Charles Wesley, he wept much in preaching; he exhorted and entreated, but he mostly spoke as "one having authority" from God. Hence the effectiveness of his rebukes, as often recorded in his Journals. "Be silent or be gone," he cried once to a party of papists in Ireland, who interrupted his services, "and their noise ceased." "A few gentry" disturbed one of his assemblies; he "rebuked them openly, and they stood corrected." "I rebuked him sharply," he writes of a certain character, "and he was ashamed." In a "brilliant congregation, among whom were honorable and right honorable persons," he says, "I felt they were given into my hands, for God was in the midst of us." At times, however, there was mixed with this authoritative power an overwhelming pathos. In the midst of a mob "I called," he writes, "for a chair; the winds were hushed, and all was calm and still; my heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed, they were ashamed, they were melted down, they devoured every word." That must have been genuine eloquence.

His Journals continually afford examples of his power over his opponents. On entering one of his congregations he meets a man who refuses to return his bow, or to kneel during the prayer, or to stand during the singing; but under the sermon his countenance changes; soon he turns his face abashed to the wall; he stands at the second hymn, kneels at the second prayer, and as Wesley goes out catches him by the hand, and takes leave of him "with a hearty blessing." As he approaches an out-door assembly, in another place, "a

huge man" runs "fully against him;" he repeats the insult with oaths, and pressing furiously through the crowd, plants himself close by the preacher. Before the close of the sermon his countenance changes; soon he takes off his hat, and when Wesley concludes, seizes his hand, "squeezes it earnestly, and goes away quiet as a lamb." He was once accosted in Moorfields by a drunkard who could hardly stand. Wesley conversed with him and gave him his tract called, "A Word to a Drunkard." "Sir, sir," he stammered "I am wrong, I know I am wrong." He held Wesley by the hand for a full half hour. "I believe," says the latter, "he got drunk no more." In his prayers, as well as his exhortations, was this singular power manifest. "As we were concluding," he writes at Newcastle, "an eminent backslider came into my mind, and I broke out abruptly, 'Lord, is Saul also among the prophets? Is James Watson here? If he be show thy power!' Down dropped James Watson like a stone, and began crying aloud."

The calm ministerial authority which so much characterized him was not assumed; it was the spontaneous effect of a true and a natural courage. Military men instinctively recognized it whenever they came into his presence; and soldiers were among his most respectful hearers and enthusiastic admirers. Had he been a military leader, there can be no doubt that he would have been the cool, intrepid man in the field that he was in the mob. It was not only his maxim always "to face the mob," but he invariably kept his ground till he conquered it. We have seen him pelted, pushed, dragged by clamorous thousands from village to village, in the night, while the rain descended in a storm, and yet as self-possessed "as if he were in his study;" and his calm voice, ringing in prayer above the noise, silenced with awe the excited multitude, and converted their leaders into defenders who safely delivered him. Such a man on a field of battle would have courageously done whatever was to be done, whether it were to lead a forlorn hope, to head a charge, or, more

difficult still, to conduct a perilous retreat. It is doubtful whether John Wesley ever felt, or could readily feel, the emotion of terror. Such a susceptibility would seem to have been incompatible with his temperament. Not only in mobs, when his life was at stake, but in sudden and perilous accidents, he never lost his self-possession. As he was hastening through a narrow street a cart swiftly turned into it; he checked his horse, but was "shot over its head as an arrow from a bow," and lay with his arms and legs stretched in a line close to the wall. The wheel grazed along his side, soiling his clothes. "I found," he says, "no flutter of spirit, but the same composure as if I had been sitting in my study." Trifles, so called, often reveal the characters of great men better than their most conspicuous deeds. The bending forest shows the course of the storm, but straws show it as well and quicker.[17]

A fine humor pervaded the nature of Wesley, and often gave a striking readiness and pertinency to his words. Thomas Walsh, morbidly scrupulous, complained in a letter to him, that among the "three or four persons that tempted" him to levity "you, sir, are one by your witty proverbs." Wesley's humor, however, enhanced the blandness of his piety, and enabled him sometimes to convey reproof in a manner which could hardly be resented with ill-temper. "Michael Fenwick," he says, "was often hindered from settling in business, because God had other work for him to do. He is just made to travel with me, being an excellent groom, valet-de-chambre, nurse, and, upon occasion, a tolerable preacher." This good man one day was vain enough to complain to him that, though constantly traveling with him, his own name was never inserted in

[17] Southey expressed not publicly his full estimate of Wesley. Privately he said: "I consider him as the most influential mind of the last century—the man who will have produced the greatest effects centuries, or perhaps millenniums, hence, if the present race of men should continue so long." Wilberforce's Correspondence, vol. ii, p. 388.

Wesley's published Journals. In the next number of the Journals he found his egotism effectually rebuked. "I left Epworth," wrote Wesley, "with great satisfaction, and, about one, preached at Clayworth. I think none were unmoved but Michael Fenwick, who fell fast asleep under an adjoining hay-rick."

He could be noble in his reproofs as in all things else. Joseph Bradford was for many years his traveling companion, and considered no assistance to him too servile, but was subject to changes of temper. Wesley directed him to carry a package of letters to the post; Bradford wished to hear his sermon first; Wesley was urgent and insisted; Bradford refused; "then," said Wesley, "you and I must part." "Very good, sir," replied Bradford. They slept over it. On rising the next morning Wesley accosted his old friend and asked if he had considered what he had said, that "they must part?" "Yes, sir," replied Bradford. "And must we part?" inquired Wesley. "Please yourself, sir," was the reply. "Will you ask my pardon?" rejoined Wesley. "No, sir." "You won't?" "No, sir." "Then I will ask yours!" replied the great man. Bradford melted under the example, and wept like a child.

The aptness of Wesley's replies sometimes took the form of severe repartee, but only when it was deserved. "Sir," said a blustering, low-lived man, who attempted to push against him and throw him down; "sir, I never make way for a fool." "I always do," replied Wesley, stepping aside and calmly passing on.[18]

In befitting circumstances, however, no man could show more Christian meekness in the treatment of offenses. At Dewsbury a person, full of rage, pressed through the throng, and struck him violently on the face with the palm of his hand. Wesley, with tears in his eyes, recollecting the precept of Christ, turned to him the other cheek. His assailant was awed by his example and slunk back into the crowd; he became a friend to the Methodists, and afterward

[18] Wesleyan Magazine, 1843, p. 418.

periled his life to save one of their chapels from being destroyed by fire.[19]

No fact could better refute the imputation of fanaticism to Wesley, than the catholic spirit which he so much enjoined and exemplified; for fanaticism is never charitable. We have seen how early he broke away from his High Church exclusiveness; with what regretful wonder he looked back upon it, and how steady and benignant was the progress of his self-development in all charitable sentiments. In 1765 he wrote to his Calvinistic friend Venn: "I desire to have a league, offensive and defensive, with every soldier of Christ. We have not only one faith, one hope, one Lord, but are directly engaged in one warfare. We are carrying the war into the devil's own quarters, who therefore summons all his hosts to war. Come, then, ye that love God, to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty! I am now well nigh *miles emeritus senex, sexagenarius;* [an old soldier who has served out his time and is entitled to his discharge—a sexagenarian;] yet I trust to fight a little longer. Come and strengthen the hands, till you supply the place, of your weak but affectionate brother."[20]

He boasted, and had a right to boast, of the liberal terms of communion in his societies. "One circumstance more," he says, "is quite peculiar to the people called Methodists; that is, the terms upon which any persons may be admitted into their society. They do not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions whatever. Let them hold particular or general redemption, absolute or conditional decrees. . . . They think, and let think. One condition, and one only, is required—a real desire to save their souls. Where this is, it is enough: they desire no more: they lay stress upon nothing else: they ask only, 'Is thy heart herein as my heart? if it be, give me thy hand.' Is there," he adds, "any other society in Great Britain or Ireland that is so remote from bigotry? that is so truly of a catholic

[19] Walker's History of Methodism in Halifax, pp. 122, 126.
[20] Works, vol. vii, p. 305.

spirit? so ready to admit all serious persons without distinction? Where is there such another society in Europe? in the habitable world? I know none. Let any man show it me that can. Till then let no one talk of the bigotry of the Methodists."[21]

This he wrote less than three years before his death. In these latter years of his life he was continually inculcating such sentiments among his people; he often took occasion of his public assemblies to expound formally this liberality of his cause. When in his eighty-fifth year, preaching in Glasgow, he says: "I subjoined a short account of Methodism, particularly insisting on the circumstance—There is no other religious society under heaven which requires nothing of men, in order to their admission into it, but a desire to save their souls. Look all round you, you cannot be admitted into the Church, or society of the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Quakers, or any others, unless you hold the same opinions with them, and adhere to the same mode of worship. The Methodists alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion. . . . Now, I do not know any other religious society, either ancient or modern, wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed since the age of the Apostles. Here is our glorying, and a glorying peculiar to us. What society shares it with us?"

When eighty-six years old he still repeats the noble boast. "I returned," he says, "to Redruth, and applied to the great congregation, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.' I then met the society, and explained at large the rise and nature of Methodism; and still aver I have never read or heard of, either in ancient or modern history, any other Church which builds on so broad a foundation as the Methodists do; which requires of its members no conformity either in opinions or modes of worship, but barely this one thing, to fear God and work righteousness."

His only restriction on opinions in his societies, was that they should not be obtruded for discussion or wrangling in

[21] Works, vol. vii, p. 321.

their devotional meetings; not the creed of a man, but his moral conduct respecting it, was a question of discipline with primitive Methodism. The possible results of such liberality were once discussed in the Conference. Wesley conclusively determined the debate by remarking: "I have no more right to object to a man for holding a different opinion from me, than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair; but if he takes his wig off, and begins to shake the powder about my eyes, I shall consider it my duty to get quit of him as soon as possible."[22]

"Is a man," he writes, "a believer in Jesus Christ, and is his life suitable to his profession? are not only the main, but the sole inquiries I make in order to his admission into our society."[23] He abhorred controversy, and seldom engaged in it when it was not necessary in self-defense. "How gladly," he wrote to a friend, alluding to four simultaneous publications against him, "how gladly would I leave all these to themselves and let them say just what they please! as my day is far spent, and my taste for controversy is utterly lost and gone;"[24] and we have seen him lamenting that he "had to spend near ten minutes in controversy" in one of his public assemblies; more than "he had done in public for many months, perhaps years, before."

Wesley was not only in advance of his own age in this as in many other respects; he was in advance of ours. Many of his own people would now fear the consequences of such unusual liberality; he himself did acts which might subject any one of his preachers, in this day, to serious suspicion, if not to greater inconvenience. He abridged and published in his Arminian Magazine, as an example for his people, the Life of Thomas Firmin, a Unitarian, and declared in his preface: that, though he had "long settled

[22] Southey's Wesley, chap. 29. The London Quarterly Review (September, 1853) says: "No reformer that the world ever saw so remarkably united faithfulness to the essential doctrines of revelation with charity toward men of every Church and creed."

[23] Journal, May 14, 1765, Works, vol. iv. [24] Ibid, Nov. 22, 1760.

in his mind that the entertaining of wrong notions concerning the Trinity was inconsistent with real piety," yet "as he could not argue against matter of fact," "he dare not deny that Mr. Firmin was a pious man, although his notions of the Trinity were quite erroneous."[25] He never hesitated to recognize the moral worth of any man, however branded in history, and however he himself differed from him in opinion. He "doubted whether that arch-heretic, Montanus, was not one of the holiest men of the second century."[26] "Yea," he adds, "I would not affirm that the arch-heretic of the fifth century, (Pelagius,) as plentifully as he has been bespattered for many ages, was not one of the holiest men of that age." He admired the piety of the best papal writers, and made some of their works household books in Methodist families. At a time when the name of Arminius was a synonym of heresy, he not only openly acknowledged his evangelical orthodoxy, but boldly placed the branded name of the great misrepresented theologian on the periodical which he published as the organ of Methodism. It was his extraordinary liberality that made him a problem, if not a heretic, in the estimation of many of his pious contemporaries; and his sermon on the "Catholic Spirit" would excite a sensation of surprise, if not alarm, in many a modern orthodox congregation. Yet what modern theologian has held more tenaciously or defined more accurately the doctrines of spiritual Christianity?

It is impossible that such a mind could be either weak or wicked; and it may be doubted whether the deeds or the sentiments of John Wesley show most the genuine greatness of the man. His double excellence proves his double superiority over his age.

It has sometimes been asked whether he is entitled to rank in the highest class of great men? The question is vague, and hardly admits of an unqualified answer. Of the two highest classes of great minds—the speculative, or

[25] Arminian Magazine, 1786, p. 253.

[26] Sermon on "Wisdom of God's Counsels," Works, vol. ii.

"philosophical" thinkers on the one hand; and the practical, comprising great legislators, captains, and inventors, on the other—it may be doubted which is entitled to the supremacy. The former, if we do not include in it the poetic, or rather the artistic genius, has afforded comparatively little advantage to mankind, beyond an exhibition of the greatness of the human faculties. Speculative inquiry has seldom given to the world a great demonstrated truth. It is doubtful that it has yet afforded a single unquestionable result in the highest field of its research—that sublime sphere of abstract truth which is usually called speculative philosophy; and its investigations of the constitution of the human mind are yet far from settling, with scientific certainty, any theory of psychology.

On the other hand, a single great practical life, sometimes a single act of such a life, has advanced appreciably the whole civilized world. A great captain has broken the chains of a nation. A great legislator has set free the energies of millions of men for progress in all useful enterprises. A single philanthropist has initiated improvements in the administration of justice which have alleviated the anguish of tens of thousands, have reformed the prison discipline and penal jurisprudence of his country, and promise yet to turn prisons into schools, and to render the gallows a barbarity, abhorrent as well to the justice as the mercy of mankind. A diffident, poor, and drudging artisan, by the invention of the steam-engine, has given to his own country an aggregate of steam-power equal to the hands of more than four hundred millions of men, more than equal to twice the number of males capable of labor on our planet—an invention which has already, in its combined power throughout the globe, a capacity for work equal to the male capacity for manual toil of five or six planets like ours; such a man may be said to create new worlds on the surface of our own.

Even the greatest mind which has influenced modern scientific inquiry, while teaching the world how to think,

never discovered a new scientific fact. He gave not a single original invention to the practical arts, though his mighty intellect, expounding and systematizing a thought which was scientifically as old as Aristotle and practically as old as human reason, has directed all subsequent practical studies.

The classification of great men must inevitably be difficult and ambiguous; but the genius which most influences the sentiments, if not the intellect of men, the genius of great painters, sculptors, architects, and poets, may perhaps be more relevantly included in the class of great practical, than in that of great speculative minds. The speculations of Plato, Descartes, Leibnitz, and Kant, considered apart from the beneficial example of superior intellectual power which they present, have added little or nothing to the advancement of the race, and the few examples of practical utility which can be cited from the history of philosophic thinkers might be claimed as exceptional to their usual classification. Even the mathematics rank doubtfully, at least, between the two classes: the discoveries of Newton appertain to the physical world, and the greatest of his successors has legitimately placed the proudest monument of astronomical knowledge in the class of scientific mechanics. But amid the ambiguities which beset this question—a question more curious, perhaps, than important—there can be little hesitancy in placing John Wesley in the first rank of those historical men whose greatness in the legislature, the cabinet, the field, philanthropy, or any sphere of active life, is attributable to their practical sagacity, energy, and success. In these three respects what man in history transcends him? If it can be affirmed that he was far from being a great, a profound thinker; that, as some of his critics have pronounced, his mind was more "logical," or even "intuitional,"[27] than philosophic, yet who can deny him the tribute of the historian of his country, that he conducted "a most remarkable moral revolution; was a man whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature; whose genius

[27] The first is Coleridge's, the second Isaac Taylor's opinion.

for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu, and who, whatever his errors may have been, devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered the highest good of his species."[28] The somewhat vague affirmation that his mind was more intuitional than philosophical, if it has any meaning at all, must signify that his sagacity was so rapid and accurate that the processes of reasoning and judgment, usual in other men, were, not absent, but scarcely perceptible in his clear and prompt intellect. The results of the practical facts with which Wesley had to deal, like all the practical affairs of men, must always be contingent, and there can be no intuition of contingent results. Their right anticipation must be the effect of calculations and combinations of the intellect.

If Wesley was deficient in what constitutes the highest speculative or philosophic mind, this deficiency itself was perhaps a necessary qualification for the more utilitarian greatness to which he was appointed. It was necessary that he should be a great legislator in order to render secure the fruits of his greatness in so many other respects. Speculative philosophers have seldom been good legislators; the history of great men affords not one example of the two characters combined. The Republic of Plato is still an ideal system of beautiful puerilities to statesmen; the Politics of Aristotle have seldom had a legislative copyist; the Utopia of Sir Thomas More is still a Utopia, the source of proverbial expression to our language, but of no laws to our commonwealths; the new Atlantis of Bacon is yet a dream, notwithstanding its utilitarian suggestions; Locke's Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina were found impracticable; and Rousseau's *Contrat Social* ranks only as an example of political rhetoric. But John Wesley founded an eccle-

[28] Macaulay, article on Southey's "Colloquies on Society," Edinburgh Review, 1850; and Essays, Critical and Miscellaneous, p. 100. (Philadelphia, 1845.) Buckle (History of Civilization in England, vol. i, chap. 7.) says: "strongly as this is expressed, it will scarcely appear an exaggeration to those who have compared the success of Wesley with his difficulties." Buckle pronounces Wesley "the first of theological statesmen."

siastical system which has only become more efficient by the lapse of a hundred years, and which is acknowledged to be more effective, whether for good or evil, than any other in the Protestant world. More than has been usual with the founders of systems of policy, whether in Church or State, it was his own work. His most invidious though most entertaining biographer has acknowledged his ability as a legislator, and conceded that "whatever power was displayed in the formation of the economy of Methodism was his own."[29] He began his great work not only without prestige, as has been shown, but in entirely adverse circumstances. The moral condition of the nation, which required his extraordinary plans, was the most formidable difficulty to their prosecution. He threw himself out upon the general demoralization without reputation, without influential friends, without money, with no other resource than the soul within him and the God above him. Before he had fairly begun his great career, he was reduced even below the ordinary advantages of common English clergymen; he had become already the object of derision; he had no church, and was turned out of the pulpits of his brethren. Excepting some insignificant societies, like that of Fetter Lane, the highway or the field and the reckless mob were all that remained to him. But he began his work; he united his rude converts into "Bands," formed "Classes," built Chapels, appointed Trustees, Stewards, Leaders, Exhorters; organized a Lay Ministry, and rallied into it men of extraordinary characters and talents; founded the Conference; gave his societies a discipline and a constitution, a literature, a psalmody and a liturgy; saw his cause established in the United States with an episcopal organization, planted in the British North American Provinces, and in the West Indies, and died at last with his system apparently completed, universally effective and prosperous, sustained by five hundred and fifty itinerant and thousands of local preachers, and more than a hundred

[29] Southey's Wesley, chap. 29.

and forty thousand members,[30] and so energetic that many men who had been his co-laborers lived to see it the predominant body of Dissenters in the United Kingdom and the British Colonies, the most numerous Church of the United States of America, and successfully planted on most of the outlines of the Missionary world.

The success of such a career depends, of course, much upon "circumstances;" but circumstances may develop great men, they cannot create them. He is great who can turn favorable circumstances to great account; he is greater who can create his own favorable circumstances, as well as turn them to account. Wesley did both, if any man in history ever did. The success which depends on external conditions is often impaired or defeated by the lack of the comprehensive vigilance and skill which can control the whole series of circumstances essential to success; often the critical one in the series may be obscure; the key to the whole may therefore be lost in an unguarded emergency, and many a career, splendidly begun, has thus come to an impotent conclusion. It was next to impossible for Wesley to have failed in this manner. Not only his clear discernment saw, but his unintermitted and steady energy seized and appropriated all facilities, small and great. If it should be said that he had superfluous labors, it certainly cannot be said that he had deficient diligence; and if he sometimes availed himself of unnecessary circumstances, it was hardly possible that he could lose a necessary one.

Few men have shown more than Wesley that self-possession or repose which is characteristic of the greatest minds, and which art has instinctively impressed upon the classic works of antiquity. It was doubtless one of the causes as well as one of the indications of his power. He could not easily, if at all, be disconcerted, or thrown from the right attitude of his strength. We have seen how he moved, year after year, through varied and intolerable opposition—

[30] Adding to the figures given at Wesley's last Conference the subsequent increase in America before his death.

attacks from the press, the pulpit, and the mob; but he has always appeared the same calm, powerful man. It was not his temperament alone, but his faith, as much or more, which thus sustained him. He believed that he was right, and therefore trusted consequences to God; and wrongs from which the noblest natures would most revolt, could not arrest or dismay him. During the Calvinistic controversy some of his opponents had the confidence of his intractable wife, who had not only deserted him, but had carried with her his papers and correspondence, and refused to return them.[31] The correspondence is known to have been interpolated in such way as to appear to justify her monomaniacal jealousy. It was about to be published in the Morning Post by his antagonists, but one of their own party, out of regard to the honor of religion, hastened to Charles Wesley, and entreated him to communicate the fact to his brother, that, if possible, the scandal might be averted. The letters were to be published on the morrow, but Wesley had an engagement to preach that day at Canterbury, and had promised to take with him the daughter of his brother, to gratify her curiosity with a view of the ancient Cathedral. Charles, alarmed at the prospect, hastened to the Foundry. "Never," writes his daughter, "shall I forget the manner in which my father accosted my mother on his return home. 'My brother,' said he, 'is indeed an extraordinary man. I placed before him the importance of the character of a minister; the evil consequences which might result from his indifference to it; the cause of religion; stumbling-blocks cast in the way of the weak; and urged him by every relative and public motive to answer for himself, and stop the publication. His reply was, 'Brother, when I devoted to God my ease, my time, my life, did I except my reputation? No. Tell Sally I will take her to Canterbury to-morrow.' I ought to add, that the letters in question were satisfactorily proved to be mutilated, and no scandal resulted from his trust in God."

[31] See vol. i, book iv, chap. 2.

A fact like this, with a man like Wesley, speaks to all hearts, but its noblest significance can be known only to the noblest minds.

But was he faultless? If he had been, he would have been less admirable to us, for the truest human greatness is in the combat with evil; he would have been less suited for his great work, for to men rather than to angels has the Gospel been committed.

Besides the minute imperfections which belong to most men, Wesley has been charged with ambition and credulity. The writer who has dwelt most upon the latter weakness has nevertheless, however inconsistently, deemed it a sort of fitness for Wesley's peculiar mission, and with a noticeable credulity himself, has supposed, as we have seen,[32] that even the mysterious noises at the Epworth rectory were preternatural, or at least extramundane, and were a means of laying open his faculty of belief, and of creating a right of way for the supernatural through his mind. When it is remembered that Wesley's age was one of general skepticism among thinkers, we cannot be surprised if he revolted, in his great work, to the opposite extreme, and the error was certainly on the best side. Credulity might have injured his work, but skepticism would have ruined it, or rather would have rendered it impossible.

If his followers cannot deny the charge; if they must admit that in a certain form this defect is pervasive in his Journals and fragmentary writings, yet should they make the admission with well guarded qualifications. They should remind themselves that he seldom gives a direct opinion of the supposed preternatural facts which he so often records; that they are presented with circumstantial particularity as the data for an opinion on the part of others; that, singularly enough, and a noteworthy proof of his good sense, they seldom or never appear in his standard theological writings, hardly tinge the works which he left for the practical guidance of his people, but are almost invaria-

[32] Vol. i, book iv, chap. 3.

bly given as matters of curiosity and inquiry in his miscellaneous and fugitive writings; and that no one doctrine or usage of Methodism was permitted by him to bear the slightest impression of them to posterity.

The severity with which this weakness of Wesley has been treated by his critics is an exception to the usual treatment of historical characters; for what great man has not had some marked eccentricity of opinion or conduct? And what was this defect of Wesley but an eccentricity of opinion? If it was characteristic of his opinions, it was not characteristic of the man; for what man was more rigorously practical in piety, or more liberal about opinions? what man ever combined the noble, self-possessed enthusiasm which is essential to the heroic character, with so little of the passion or uncharitableness which is essential to fanaticism? His critics would impair his authority as a thinker by contemning his credulity; but they deem it no wonder, or at least no detraction, if indeed not an amiable illustration of the heart, apart from the intellect, of his friend, the greatest writer as well as the greatest "moralist" of his age, who shared so largely this very weakness of Wesley. Men who sneer at Wesley are but amused when, in reading the pages of Boswell, they find Johnson dissenting from a ghost story of Wesley only because the latter did not, in his opinion, investigate the case sufficiently, and affirming that "this is a question which, after five thousand years, is yet undecided; a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding."[33] Plato, as Johnson called Wesley, might

[33] Boswell's Johnson, anno 1778. "A man who told him of a water spout or a meteoric stone generally had the lie direct given him for his pains. A man who told him of a prediction or a dream wonderfully accomplished was sure of a courteous hearing. He related with a grave face how old Mr. Cave, of St. John's Gate, saw a ghost, and how this ghost was something of a shadowy being. He went himself on a ghost-hunt to Cock Lane, and was angry with John Wesley for not following up another scent of the same kind with proper spirit and perseverance." Macaulay's Miscellanies, p. 146.

well linger when all the rest of the audience had slunk away, if Johnson still stood in the lecturer's desk. The Cock Lane ghost story has never impaired Johnson's rank as an author; but had Wesley shown the superstitious weakness of the literary giant in many well-known and ludicrous instances, he could scarcely have been treated with more scorn than he has incurred by his record of supposed preternatural facts, of a class, too, which have not yet ceased to be believed by the most of mankind. He recorded these facts, it should be borne in mind, in an age in which Christian Scotland executed at the stake a supposed witch,[34] and in the next century after that in which the good Sir Matthew Hale had condemned to the gibbet two women for witchcraft, and the great Bacon had avowed his belief in astrology, and sat in a Parliament in which an enactment was passed against witchcraft—a statute which was not repealed till Wesley himself was thirty-three years old.

The treatment which Wesley has received on account of this one weakness, so different from the usual charity of writers toward great men, is perhaps a real though undesigned compliment. It would seem to arise from the fact that little else can be found in his pure life and noble character for sarcasm, and that this therefore must be made as available as possible.

It has not, however, sufficed to save him from the imputation of ambition. This charge affords, in fine, the chief explanation of his extraordinary life to his best known biographer. According to that writer, "no conqueror or poet

[34] This, the last victim in Scotland, was burned, according to Sir Walter Scott, as late as 1722. Blackstone, the contemporary of Wesley, says: "To deny the possibility, nay, actual existence, of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once flatly to contradict the revealed word of God in various passages both of the Old and New Testament; and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation in the world hath in its turn borne testimony, either by examples seemingly well attested, or by prohibitory laws; which, at least, suppose the possibility of a commerce with evil spirits." Commentaries, book v, chap. 4, sect. 6. Buckle (Hist. of Civ., vol. i, p. 268) quotes a similar opinion from Wesley, but forgets this of his great contemporary.

was ever more ambitious," and "the love of power was the ruling passion of his mind." It is due to Southey, however, to say that he acknowledged the error of this charge. An admirable defense of Wesley by a Churchman,[35] who personally knew him during many years, convinced the biographer of his error. "I had," he says, "formed a wrong estimate of Wesley's character, in supposing him to have been actuated by ambition."[36] A letter is also extant in which he again confesses that he "is convinced that he was mistaken in supposing ambition entered largely into Mr. Wesley's acting impulses," and promises "to make such alterations in the book as are required in consequence."[37]

That Wesley loved power would be no very serious charge. Power, as a means of success and usefulness, may be as desirable as any other talent, as genius itself; the vice is not in the passion, but in its motive; to indulge it for selfish ends would be pernicious and criminal, as the pursuit of money or of any other means of success would be; but as a means for the accomplishment of good ends it may be as virtuous as the diligent pursuit of resources by the philanthropist, or of intelligence by the student. Wesley's

[35] Alexander Knox, Esq. See Appendix to Southey's Wesley.

[36] "I now believe," he adds, "that he (Knox) was right, and in my new edition I shall acknowledge it." I quote from a conversation of Southey with Joseph Carne, Esq., F.R.S., etc., given in Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i, book iii, chap. 1.

[37] Letter from Southey to James Nichols, Esq. See Appendix to this volume. Smith gives an engraved fac-simile of the letter. Southey's son, Rev. C. Cuthbert Southey, makes no allusion to this change of his father's opinion, in his edition of the Life of Wesley. The London Quarterly Review (September, 1853, p. 56) remarks: "It is well known that Dr. Southey greatly modified his published views of Wesley's character, wholly retracting the charge of an ambitious purpose in the formation of his societies; and it is no less certain, that he made considerable preparations for an amended edition of the biography, which, indeed, was advertised as being in the press just previously to the author's lamentable illness. Yet the son, upon whom the task of publication ultimately devolved, has thought proper to suppress every sign of this important change, and has suffered his father's memory to lose the advantage even of its bare acknowledgment. The reproach, in justice, will recoil upon himself."

whole life was a demonstration that he sought not power for himself. What man ever more thoroughly sacrificed the usual selfish motives of ambition? What human life was ever more consecrated to the welfare of others? That he had a conscious pleasure in the useful exercise of his great but unsought power need not be denied; it was the right of his power, as his power was the right of his talents and position. He would have been an exception to the usual and beneficent law of nature herself, in this respect, had he not known that exalted pleasure. Nature accompanies her endowments with instinctive dispositions for their use. The man who is constituted or capacitated for the exercise of power would not be in harmony with himself if he had not the instinctive enjoyment of his appointed task; and the highest moral law of his position requires, not that he should be unconscious of this enjoyment, but that he should consecrate it by benevolent motives, and regulate it by that "temperance in all things" which, if it is a self-denial to the vices, is still more an enhancement of the virtues.

Many of the foregoing remarks apply to Wesley's personal religious character, and on that subject scarcely an additional word is needed. "By their fruits ye shall know them," and the whole of our narrative is an illustration of his piety. One observation, however, is worthy of emphatic record: that while few, if any, modern public teachers have treated more of the principles of the spiritual life, or held up a higher standard of them—of Justification, Regeneration, Sanctification, and the evidences and tests which apply to them—few, if any, have been more exempt from the taint of Mysticism. We have seen him throwing to the winds the Mystic doctrines while returning, on the ocean, from Georgia; and it is a noteworthy fact, that except the early and comparatively brief period of his spiritual awakening, and of his intercourse with the Moravian brethren, the minute record of his life, presented in his Journals, contains hardly an instance of that introspective and hypochondriacal anxiety which so much mars most religious biographies. We meet in this

wonderful autobiography with occasional and brief ejaculations of prayer and praise, but with no self-anatomization. It is vigorous with the cheerful moral health of his own mind throughout, however marred by the narration of disease in other minds. Methodism spread so rapidly, and was so much in contrast with the religious teachings of the times, that it was natural enough it should come in contact with morbid consciences almost everywhere; some of the characters sketched in the preceding pages were doubtless subjects of mental as well as moral disease, but Methodism was not responsible for the fact. It found such sufferers scattered throughout its course; if in some instances they sought in it excitement which could only exasperate their infirmity it nevertheless, in most instances, brought them the relief which they could not find in the heartless religious instructions of the age. And, above all, the practical character of Wesley's own genius was so impressed upon his discipline, that religious melancholy was usually sooner or later dispelled by the energetic and beneficent practical habits to which his followers were trained. Without designing it, he established a religious system which, while it could not fail to attract diseased minds, was singularly adapted, in both its hopeful theology and its active discipline, to cure them; and there has been occasion in these volumes to record not a few affecting cases of chronic mental disease, in which life was rendered not only tolerable, but useful and holy, and death itself joyful, by the moral support of the Gospel as taught in the doctrines and embodied in the regimen of Methodism. Hundreds of sufferers, as they read this remark, will confirm it with grateful tears.

To our more common human sympathies the character of Wesley presents attractions rarely to be found in the records of the lives of great men. Such records usually ignore the more personal or intimate traits of public characters. It would seem, indeed, to be assumed in them that exhibitions of the common affections of our nature would derogate from their subjects, as reducing

them too much to the common level of humanity; whereas it is precisely in these respects that the common mind most readily recognizes them, and the revelations of the heart in the life show the real man more infallibly than the revelations of the intellect. It is doubtless true, also, that public men, absorbed in plans of ambition, or even of usefulness, often lose to some extent those sensibilities which make the whole race akin, and the loss of which can be compensated by no other virtues. Perhaps the truest proof of the highest style of character is presented in the co-existence of an unimpaired heart with the highest development of the intellect, or the greatest energy of life. To the mass of mankind, including the best of them, the character of Luther would lose half its interest and worth, were his passion for music and for nature, his sympathy for his friends, his fondness for his children, and his love of the virtuous and beautiful Catharine von Bora unrecorded. Not only to the common heart, but to the discernment of the highest minds, the pure and mighty Reformer did a scarcely less noble deed in rescuing the nun of Nimptschen, and in restoring her to her appropriate sphere as a woman, by placing her in his own home and heart, than he did by wresting from the grasp of the pope the scepter of universal religious domination. Wesley's greatness as a public man is hardly more distinctly recorded than his amiability and tenderness as a private man. We have continually had occasion, in these pages, to admire his personal, apart from his public character. Where can we find, in the records of historical men, a more unimpaired heart amid the labors and hostilities of a long public career? His friendships were strong, even to weakness. His love of nature retained the freshness of youth in the decay of age; it was not so much a sentiment of taste, as an instinct of his own nature, a loving fellowship with the universal nature. His temper, sometimes, yet only momentarily, ruffled, had not merely the serenity of health, but was radiant with religious joyfulness, and playful in extreme age with the blandest humor. While moving the realm by

his activity and moral power, he was the welcome guest of humble households, the delight of dinner-tables, the familiar companion of children. While hundreds of stalwart itinerants responded to his commands, as veterans to the orders of a hero on the field, and mobs recoiled before his calm but mighty word, and rude armies of ten, twenty, thirty thousands listened, wept, or prayed, under his discourses, on the mountain sides or in the market-places, his sympathetic presence brought light and consolation to the hearths of desolate homes, to the despair of deathbeds, to the guilt and anguish of prisons, to the frenzy even of the madhouse. But did this man—so great, and yet so simple that the simplicity of his anomalous life seems the most inexplicable fact of his greatness—in his stern, inflexible career, extending through most of a century, in his life apparently never knowing privacy, did he himself know the affections and tenderness which he so generally excited, the sorrow which he so often touched and turned into joy—did his "heart know its own bitterness?" Was this never-resting life—these wanderings to and fro while more than two generations of men were passing away—the effect of a passion for public life which had extinguished the usual instincts of the heart for wife, children, and home, for the privacy in which the heart best lives, for quiet and rest and the affections? How often have we seen him, in scenes of rural repose, or domestic virtue, longing for relief from the restless duties of his career; for a home, however humble, where, with books and meditative tranquility, he might live more unto himself, or for the few that might be dearer to him than himself! But one sublime and mysterious word always broke the spell of these seductive wishes—Eternity! "I believe there is an eternity, and must arise and go hence!" Poetry and music were natural endowments with him, as with most of his remarkable family. His correspondence with his unhappy wife, it is said, reveals the tenderest sensibility—a heart which proves him capable of having been the most affectionate of husbands. His numerous published letters

to female correspondents are the most characteristic of his writings; they are fervid with pure and delicate sentiment. This man who worked so mightily could also love intensely. He never deemed it necessary to record an apology for his affection for Grace Murray. All accounts of her show that she was worthy of him; that she possessed not only rare attractions of person and manners, but of heart. She combined an indefinable charm of character with extraordinary talents; she formed and regulated many of his female classes in the north of England; she traveled with him in Ireland, and with womanly grace and modesty, as well as skillful ability, promoted among the women of Methodism the great work in which he was engaged. She reciprocated his affection for her, though with shrinking diffidence.[38] His hopes were defeated by the management of his brother and Whitefield, who probably apprehended that domestic life would interfere with his public labors, and hastily secured her marriage to one of his preachers. We have seen how bitterly he felt his loss;[39] and the relief which he sought in unslackened devotion to his great work is proof of his genuine greatness rather than of his want of sensibility. He kept the painful recollection locked in his own heart, never obtruding it in any of his subsequent published letters, except in one instance when he ministered relief to a Christian friend, in a similar sorrow, by referring to his own, the keenness of which he describes as extreme. He "saw his friend that was, and him to whom she was sacrificed," immediately after the sacrifice, but never again records an allusion to her except in the single instance mentioned, and a poetical account of her history and of his affection for her, which he kept sacredly during his life, but which was discovered and published by one of his biographers—a long, sad, heart-touching narrative, in which he dwells with minutest interest on every recollection of the case. It is as fine an example of his poet-

[38] See his poetical account of her in the Appendix.

[39] See vol. i, book iii, chap. 2, and book iv, chap. 2.

ical style as of his heart. The preacher whom Grace Murray married left Wesley's Connection. He died in ten years after his marriage; the lady survived till 1803. She rejoined the Methodists, was many years a class-leader among them, and lived and died esteemed and beloved by them. Wesley pursued his career without once turning aside to re-open the wound in either heart by an interview. When eighty-five years old he allowed himself, however, the pleasure of a single conversation with her. She was in London, and expressed a wish to see him. Accompanied by Henry Moore, he called upon her. Though he "preserved more than his usual self-possession," the meeting, says Moore, was affecting. It did not continue long, and Moore never heard him mention her name afterward.

Such, then, was the character of John Wesley; a character which no candid historian can, after a thorough study of his life and works, deny to him, however desirable it might seem to be able to attribute to him greater faults for the sake of an apparently more impartial estimate. The candid student of history will be able to find in all its records but few men who had fewer faults, however many he may suppose he finds who had greater abilities or greater virtues.

We shall see, as we now turn to a fuller consideration of his opinions, his ecclesiastical discipline, the extraordinary means of popular improvement which he founded, and their results, that the historical importance of his life has not been exaggerated.

BOOK VI.

THE DOCTRINES, DISCIPLINE, LITERATURE, AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF METHODISM.

CHAPTER I.

WESLEY'S DOCTRINES AND OPINIONS.

Historical Standpoint of Methodism — It taught the Doctrines of the Anglican Church, but taught them with new Distinctness and Power — Wesley's View of the Moral System of the Universe — The Moral Constitution and Fall of Man — The Moral Economy of our World, as modified by the Atonement — Evil will ultimate in Good — Wesley's Opinion on the Fate of the Heathen — His Views of Justification — Of Regeneration — Of Sanctification — His Use of the Phrase Christian Perfection — His Definition of it — His Definition of Saving Faith — His Doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit — It is a Doctrine of the General Church — Sir William Hamilton's Testimony — Wesley's Cautions on the Subject — Historical Importance of the Doctrines of Methodism — Wesley's Views of the Brute Creation — Its Immortality — Gradation of the living Creation — Demoniacal Agency — Physical Phenomena of Religious Excitement — The "Jerks" — Religious Catalepsy — Wesley's Doctrince of Providence — He denies the Distinction between a General and Special Providence.

Remarkable as were the agents and principal events of Methodism, thus far narrated, we cannot adequately estimate it without a fuller consideration of its teachings, its discipline, institutions, literature, and other characteristics. Though we have carefully noted their successive development, we have now reached a period where we may properly pause and review them more comprehensively.

The historical or philosophical standpoint of Methodism has been sufficiently defined in the outset of this narrative,[1] and it has not been deemed necessary to restate it often in general remarks. The current of events has flowed naturally from this its fountain-head, and has been a continuous illustration of the providential design of the great movement—the revival of spiritual life in the Churches, and its extension beyond them. Wesley never lost sight of this distinctive mission of his cause. All its teachings, all its practical adaptations, contemplated this one capital purpose.

He professed to adhere faithfully to the fundamental theology of the Church of England. The theological distinction of Methodism lay not in novel tenets, but in the clearness and power with which it illustrated and applied the established doctrines of the English Reformation; and, in harmony with its own characteristic design, it nearly confined its teachings to such of these doctrines as relate to personal or spiritual religion: repentance, faith, justification, regeneration, sanctification, and the witness of the Spirit. These great Scriptural truths have never, since the earliest age of the Church, been more precisely defined, or presented in a more homogeneous system, than in the works of Wesley and Fletcher, and the other standard Methodist writers. They have been the life-energy of Methodism throughout its whole range; and have doubtless contributed not a little, by their habitual prominence, to promote the evangelical liberality of the denomination, by placing in subordination the polemical themes which have usually disturbed the harmony and wasted the energy of Christendom. "Our main doctrines, which include all the rest," said Wesley, "are repentance, faith, and holiness. The first of these we account, as it were, the porch of religion; the next the door; the third religion itself."[2]

In his admirable sermon on the Properties of the Law,[3]

[1] Vol. i, book i, chap. 1.
[2] Principles of a Methodist further explained, Works, vol. v.
[3] Works, vol i, p. 306.

Wesley has attempted to define the basis of all theology. The moral system of the universe—the "moral law"—is a unit. It is not an arbitrary enactment by the Supreme Ruler, but grows out of his own essential nature. God is a law to himself in this respect. "The law of God is supreme, unchangeable reason; it is unalterable rectitude; it is the everlasting fitness of all things that are or ever were created." Its apparent modifications, in its application to different states of the moral universe, are not essential changes, but the same unaltered and unalterable law in varied conditions. It reigns among the sons of light in higher worlds; it was the government of unfallen man in paradise; it is the supreme unchangeable law in our fallen world, the Atonement being supplemental to it, mercifully to provide for man's transgressions. As subjects of law, intelligent beings must have moral freedom, otherwise they could not be moral agents. "For this end he endowed them with understanding to discern truth from falsehood, good from evil, and, as a necessary result of this, with liberty—a capacity of choosing the one and refusing the other. By this they were likewise enabled to offer him a free and willing service; a service rewardable in itself, as well as most acceptable to their gracious Master."

By the fall of man a new condition intervened in the moral system, so far as its application to our planet is concerned. Man died spiritually. If Wesley did not like the phrase total depravity, yet he evidently agreed with the usual definition of that phrase by theologians. Men fell, as a race, in Adam; all are corrupt, not by the imputation of Adam's sin, but by the natural corruption "which is engendered of the offspring of Adam;" for man's moral nature is inherited, in a sense analogous to the hereditary derivation of his physical and intellectual natures with their respective infirmities.[4] Wesley did not like the vague term "sover-

[4] He did not believe in the infusion, but in the generation of souls. See Journal, Jan. 27, 1762, and Oct. 25, 1763, Works, vol. iv. Correct by these his note on Heb. xii, 9.

eignty," which has led to so many wranglings and absurdities among dogmatic theologians. Whatever God does, is done not from arbitrary choice, but because it is right, for to do right is a law and a necessity of the Divine nature; and the distinction between right and wrong is not arbitrary with God, but arises from his essential attributes. The continuation of the human race after the fall, without moral provision for its unborn millions, we cannot conceive to be reconcilable with the Divine justice. Man, therefore, though utterly fallen, is continued in existence under a new and gracious economy. Every human being receives the divine aid which is necessary for his responsibility to the Divine law. Men then have good within them, though not from themselves. All who die in infancy, all idiots, or other irresponsible persons, are provided for by the Atonement—the essential condition of the new moral economy of the fallen world.[5] All heathens will be judged under that gracious economy according to the light they have; all responsible sinners, who repent and receive the atonement, will be pardoned, and if faithful to the end will be saved.[6]

[5] Wesley contended that the infinite wisdom and goodness which introduced a system under which evil was a possibility, will bring good out of evil. "But this is nowise inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God, because all may recover, through the second Adam, whatever they lost through the first. Not one child of man finally loses thereby, unless by his own choice. A remedy has been provided which is adequate to the disease. Yea, more than this, mankind have gained, by the fall," etc. He proceeds to show at length in what respects.

[6] As a Creator, says Wesley, God acts according to his "sovereign will;" for in his creative acts justice is not involved, as nothing is due to what has no being; but in regard to the heathen, and the apparent disadvantages of some men, from their external conditions, he says: "What an amazing difference there is between one born and bred up in a pious English family, and one born and bred among the Hottentots. Only we are sure the difference cannot be so great as to necessitate one to be good, or the other to be evil; to force one into everlasting glory, or the other into everlasting burnings. For, as a governor, the Almighty cannot possibly act according to his own mere sovereign will, but, as he has expressly told us, according to the invariable rules both of justice and mercy. Whatsoever, therefore, it hath pleased him to do of his sovereign pleasure as Creator, he will judge the world in righteousness, and every

He discriminates three stages, or rather three distinctions, in the personal experience of the "great salvation" thus provided.[7]

Justification is distinguished from regeneration only logically. It is a relative fact—a work done for us rather than in us—the pardon of sin, whereby the relation of the sinner to the Divine law is changed, and he is recognized, through the Atonement, as no longer guilty, but just, and has "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Regeneration is a work wrought by the Holy Spirit in the believing soul, whereby it passes from death unto life, and receiving "the spirit of adoption," enters into communion with God.

Sanctification, as a doctrine, received peculiar illustration and enforcement from Wesley, and the standard Methodist writers generally. It is the purification of the believer subsequently to regeneration. It is usually gradual; it may be instantaneous, as, like justification, it is received by faith. "When we begin to believe," Wesley said in his Minutes of Conference, "then sanctification begins; and as faith increases holiness increases." But this experience, he taught, should be sought immediately; and as it is obtained by faith, it is the privilege of all believers at any time. He called it "perfection," a name which has incurred no little animadversion, but which he used as Scriptural, and as having been so used by Law, Lucas, Macarius, Fenelon, and other writers, Protestant and Papal. Clemens Alexandrinus had drawn out Paul's doctrine of Christian perfection, though with some defects, in a portraiture of the perfect Christian. Wesley's statement of the doctrine, in its right analysis, agrees with the highest standards of the theological world.[8] He differed from

man therein, according to the strictest justice. He will punish no man for doing anything which he could not possibly avoid; neither for omitting anything which he could not possibly do." There was not only a generous human feeling, but a direct common sense, in all Wesley's opinions on such subjects.

[7] Sermons, first two volumes of his works, *passim*.

[8] See vol. i, pp. 405, 406.

them only in his clearer and more urgent promulgation of the great truth; in making it an exoteric rather than an esoteric opinion; in declaring that what other theologians taught as a possibility—the rare enjoyment of some, was the privilege of all. Fletcher has given us a remarkable essay on the doctrine, proving it to be Scriptural, and in accordance with the theological teachings of the best divines.[9] Wesley wrote an elaborate treatise upon it.[10] He taught not absolute or Adamic, but Christian perfection. Perfect Christians "are not," he says, "free from ignorance, no, nor from mistake. We are no more to expect any man to be infallible than to be omniscient. . . . From infirmities none are perfectly freed till their spirits return to God; neither can we expect, till then, to be wholly freed from temptation; for 'the servant is not above his Master.' But neither in this sense is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no perfection of degrees, none which does not admit of a continual increase."

To one of his correspondents he says: "The proposition which I will hold is this: 'Any person may be cleansed from all sinful tempers, and yet need the atoning blood.' For what? For 'negligences and ignorances;' for both words and actions, (as well as omissions,) which are, in a sense, trangressions of the perfect law. And I believe no one is clear of these till he lays down this corruptible body."[11] Perfection, as defined by Wesley, is not then perfection, according to the absolute moral law; it is what he calls it, *Christian Perfection;* perfection according to the new moral economy introduced by the Atonement, in which the heart being sanctified, fulfills the law by love, (Rom. xii, 8, 10,) and its involuntary imperfections are provided for, by that economy, without the imputation of guilt, as in the case of infancy and all irresponsible persons.

The only question, then, can be, is it possible for good

[9] Last Check to Antimonianism, Works, vol, ii.
[10] Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Works, vol. vi.
[11] Letter 190, Works, vol. vi.

men so to love God that all their conduct, inward and outward, shall be swayed by love? that even their involuntary defects shall be swayed by it? Is there such a thing as the inspired writer calls the "perfect love" which "casteth out fear?" (1 John iv, 18.) Wesley believed that there is; that it is the privilege of all saints; and that it is to be received by faith.

In a letter to one of his female correspondents he says: "I want you to be *all love*. This is the perfection I believe and teach; and this perfection is consistent with a thousand nervous disorders, which that high strained perfection is not. Indeed my judgment is, that (in this case particularly) to overdo is to undo; and that to set perfection too high, is the most effectual way of driving it out of the world." When he thus explained his opinion to Bishop Gibson, the prelate replied: "Why, Mr. Wesley, if this is what you mean by perfection, who can be against it?" "Man," he says, "in his present state, can no more attain Adamic than angelic perfection. The perfection of which man is capable, while he dwells in a corruptible body, is the complying with that kind command: 'My son, give me thy heart!' It is the loving the Lord his God, with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind." Such is his much misrepresented doctrine of Christian perfection.

The Faith which he taught as the condition of justification, regeneration, and sanctification, he has defined with much particularity. "Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is a Divine evidence and conviction, not only that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;' but also that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. It is by faith (whether we term it the essence, or rather a property thereof) that we receive Christ, that we receive him in all his offices, as prophet, priest, and king. It is by this that he is 'made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'" Again he says: "It is not an opinion, nor any number of opinions put together, be they ever so true. A string of opinions is no more Christian

faith, than a string of beads is Christian holiness. The faith by which the promise is attained, is represented by Christianity as a power wrought by the Almighty in an immortal spirit, inhabiting a house of clay, to see through that vail into the world of spirits, into things invisible and eternal; a power to discern those things which, with eyes of flesh and blood, no man hath seen, or can see; either by reason of their nature, which (though they surround us on every side) is not perceivable by these gross senses; or by reason of their distance, as being yet afar off in the bosom of eternity. It is the eye of the new-born soul, whereby every true believer 'seeth Him who is invisible.' It is the ear of the soul whereby the sinner 'hears the voice of the Son of God and lives;' the palate of the soul (if the expression may be allowed) whereby a believer 'tastes the good word of God and the powers of the world to come;' the feeling of the soul, whereby, 'through the power of the Highest overshadowing him,' he perceives the presence of Him in whom he lives, and moves, and has his being, and feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart. It is the internal evidence of Christianity, a perpetual revelation, equally strong, equally new, through all the centuries which have elapsed since the incarnation, and passing now, even as it has done from the beginning, directly from God into the believing soul. 'It is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, if thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ.' *This*, then, *is the record*, this is the evidence, emphatically so called, *that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* Why, then, have not all men this faith? Because no man is able to work it in himself; it is a work of Omnipotence. It requires no less power thus to quicken a dead soul, than to raise a body that lies in the grave. May not your own experience teach you this? Can you give yourself this faith? Is it in your power to see, or hear, or taste, or feel God? to raise in yourself any perception of God, or of an invisible world? to open an intercourse between yourself and the world of spirits? to discern either them or Him that created

them? to burst the vail that is on your heart, and let in the light of eternity? You know it is not. You not only do not, but cannot (by your own strength) thus believe. The more you labor so to do, the more you will be convinced it is the gift of God. No merit, no goodness in man, precedes the forgiving love of God. His pardoning mercy supposes nothing in us but a sense of mere sin and misery; and to all who see, and feel, and own their wants, and their utter inability to remove them, God freely gives faith, for the sake of Him 'in whom he is always well pleased.' Whosoever thou art, O man, who hast the sentence of death in thyself, unto thee said the Lord, not 'Do this, perfectly obey all my commands, and live;' but, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'"[12]

The doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit has had a vital energy in the whole history of Methodism. It presents an inward test of religious character which every Methodist is enjoined to bear with him at all times; and as it is always taught that it is accompanied by the "fruits of the Spirit," the doctrine has not been historically productive of those abuses which have been supposed natural to it. Wesley is explicit, as usual, in his definition of this doctrine. "What," he asks, "is *the witness of the Spirit?* The original word *μαρτυρία* may be rendered either (as it is in several places) *the witness*, or, less ambiguously, *the testimony*, or *the record;* so it is rendered in our translation, (1 John v, 11,) 'This is the record,' the testimony, the sum of what God testifies in all the inspired writings, 'that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' The testimony now under consideration is given by the Spirit of God to and with our spirit. He is the Person testifying. What he testifies to us is, 'that we are the children of God.' The immediate result of this testimony is, 'the fruits of the Spirit,' namely, 'love, joy, peace; long-suffering, gentleness,

[12] "I venture to avow it as my conviction, that either Christian faith is what Wesley here describes, or there is no proper meaning in the word." Coleridge: Note to Southey's Wesley, chap. 20.

goodness.' And without these, the testimony itself cannot continue. For it is inevitably destroyed, not only by the commission of any outward sin, or the omission of known duty, but by giving way to any inward sin; in a word, by whatever grieves the Holy Spirit of God. I observed, many years ago, that it is hard to find words in the language of men to explain the deep things of God. Indeed, there are none that will adequately express what the Spirit of God works in his children. But perhaps one might say, (desiring any who are taught of God to correct, soften, or strengthen the expression,) by the 'testimony of the Spirit,' I mean an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that 'Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me;' that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God. After twenty years' further consideration, I see no cause to retract any part of this. Neither do I conceive how any of these expressions may be altered so as to make them more intelligible. I can only add, that if any of the children of God will point out any other expressions which are more clear, or more agreeable to the word of God, I will readily lay these aside. Meantime let it be observed, I do not mean hereby that the Spirit of God testifies this by any outward voice; no, nor always by an inward voice, although he may do this sometimes. Neither do I suppose that he always applies to the heart (though he often may) one or more texts of Scripture. But he so works upon the soul by his immediate influence, and by a strong, though inexplicable operation, that the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm; the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that all his 'iniquities are forgiven, and his sins covered.'"

On this subject, as on his other prominent doctrines, Wesley had the concurrence of the general Church. He differed from other theologians chiefly in his attempt to popularize these high truths, and to make them thus bear on

his great purpose, the restoration of a general and living piety. He says: "With regard to the assurance of faith, I apprehend that the whole Christian Church in the first centuries enjoyed it. For though we have few points of doctrine explicitly taught in the small remains of the ante-Nicene fathers; yet, I think, none that carefully reads Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, Origen, or any other of them, can doubt whether either the writer himself possessed it, or all whom he mentions as real Christians. And I really conceive, both from the '*Harmonia Confessionum*,' and whatever else I have occasionally read, that all the Reformed Churches in Europe did once believe, 'Every true Christian has the Divine evidence of his being in favor with God.'" Again he says: "I know likewise that Luther, Melancthon, and many other (if not all) of the Reformers, frequently and strongly assert, that every believer is conscious of his own acceptance with God; and that by a supernatural evidence."[13]

The greatest philosophical writer of our age declares that *Assurance*, personal assurance, special faith, (*the feeling of certainty* that God is propitious to me, that my sins are forgiven, fiducia, plerophoria fides, fides specialis,) assurance was long universally held in the Protestant communities to be the criterion and condition of a true or *saving faith*. Luther declares that 'he who hath not assurance spews faith out;' and Melancthon, that 'assurance is the discriminating line of Christianity from heathenism.' Assurance is, indeed, the *punctum saliens* of Luther's system; and unacquaintance with this, his great central doctrine, is one prime cause of the chronic misrepresentation which runs through our recent histories of Luther and the Reformation. Assurance is no less strenuously maintained by Calvin; is held even by Arminius, and stands essentially part and parcel of all the Confessions of all the Churches of the Reformation down to the Westminster Assembly. In that Synod assurance was, in Protestantism for the *first*, and indeed the *only* time,

[13] Letters 522, 523, Works, vol. vii.

formally declared '*not to be of the essence of faith;*' and accordingly, the Scottish General Assembly has subsequently once and again condemned and deposed the holders of this, the doctrine of Luther, of Calvin, of all the other Churches of the Reformation, and of the older Scottish Church itself. In the English, and more particularly in the Irish Establishment, assurance still stands a necessary tenet of ecclesiastical belief.[14] Assurance was consequently held by all the older Anglican Churchmen, of whom Hooker may stand for the example; but assurance is now openly disavowed, without scruple, by Anglican Churchmen, high and low, when apprehended; but of these many are incognizant of the opinion, its import, its history, and even its name."[15]

It should be remarked, however, that Wesley, with his usual logical acuteness, distinguishes faith itself from assurance;[16] many good men he contends have faith, who nevertheless have not assurance, though it is their privilege to have it. He also distinguished the witness of the Spirit from the assurance of final salvation. His Arminianism enabled him to make this practically important distinction. The Calvinistic doctrine of final perseverance necessarily implies the final salvation of all who once receive genuine assurance of present regeneration. The practical liabilities of such an inference Wesley would have deprecated. He taught that the probation of even the perfect Christian still continues, and the possibility of falling, and of falling finally, is a motive for continued watchfulness. In fine, his theological system is throughout homogeneous and symmetrical.[17]

[14] See Homilies, book i, number iii, part 3, specially referred to in the eleventh of the Thirty-nine Articles; and number iv, parts 1 and 3; likewise the sixth Lambeth Article.

[15] Discussions on Philosophy, etc., by Sir William Hamilton, pp. 508, 509. London, 1858.

[16] See vol. i, book iii, chap. 5; see also Watson's Wesley, chap. 9.

[17] Watson (Life of Wesley, chap. 8) says: "According to Mr. Wesley's views, the order of our passing into a *state* of justification and conscious reconcilement to God, is, 1. True repentance, which, however, gives us no worthiness, and establishes no claim upon pardon, although it so necessarily precedes justifying faith, that all trust even in the merits of

Such were the characteristic tenets of Methodism. They were the elements of life and power to the movement. Connected with its Arminian doctrine of universal redemption, already sufficiently stated, they were promulgated and enforced throughout its whole range. They have undergone no essential change in its history; they have been attended with no historical heresy or discord in the Connection, in either the New or the Old World. Wesley gave them such lucid definitions, and they have been so practically potential, that they have produced a singular unanimity of opinion among his followers. They have thrown most of the usual topics of dogmatic controversy into abeyance, and for more than a hundred years have preserved Methodism from any important eruption of heresy, or any serious doctrinal controversy. They are the staple subjects of its biographies, (more numerous, perhaps, than in any other part of the modern Church,) of its psalmody, and of most of its other literature; of its pulpit discourses, of its classes, love-feasts, and prayer-meetings, and of the colloquial inquiries and discussions of its people; and, however its success may be attributed to its practical system, it cannot be doubted that the effectiveness of that system itself is attributable chiefly to these great truths which underlie and sustain it.

It is unnecessary to treat here of the other doctrines of Christianity which Methodism holds in common with the Protestant world. In forming a Liturgy for his American

Christ for salvation would be presumptuous and unauthorized without repentance; since, as he says, 'Christ is not even to be offered to the careless sinner.' (Sermon on 'The Law established through Faith.') 2. A supernatural *elenchos*, or assured conviction, that 'Christ loved *me*, and *gave* himself for me,' in the intention of his death; inciting to and producing full acquiescence with God's method of saving the guilty, and an entire personal trust in Christ's atonement for sin. Of this trust, actual justification is the result; but then follows, 3. The direct testimony of the Holy Spirit, giving assurance in different degrees, in different persons, and often in the same person, that I am a child of God; and, 4. Filial confidence in God. The *elenchos*, the *trust*, the *Spirit's witness*, and the *filial confidence*, he held, were frequently, but not always, so closely united as not to be distinguished as to *time*, though each is, from its *nature*, *successive* and *distinct*."

societies Wesley threw aside all formal "creeds" except that called the Apostles', but he hesitated not to repeat the others in the public service of the Church of England.

It has been justly said that upon points which have not been revealed, he formed opinions for himself which were generally clear, consistent with the Christian system, and "creditable for the most part both to his feelings and his judgment; but he laid no stress upon them, and never pro posed them for more than they were worth."[18]

His views of the brute creation were creditable to his heart if not to his reason. He believed in their original immortality, and that death ensued to them from the disorder introduced into the natural world by the fall of man, an opinion which he would have modified had geological discoveries advanced in his day as in ours. "What," he asks, "is the barrier between men and brutes—the line which they cannot pass? It is not reason. Set aside that ambiguous term; exchange it for the plain word, under standing, and who can deny that brutes have this? We may as well deny that they have sight or hearing. But it is this: man is capable of God; the inferior creatures are not. We have no ground to believe that they are, in any degree, capable of knowing, loving, or obeying God. This is the specific difference between man and brute; the great gulf which they cannot pass over. And as a loving obedience to God was the perfection of men, so a loving obedience to man was the perfection of brutes. And as long as they continued in this they were happy after their kind; happy in the right state and the right use of their respective faculties. Yea, and so long they had some shadowy resemblance of even moral goodness; for they had gratitude to man for benefits received, and a reverence for him. They had likewise a kind of benevolence to each other, unmixed with any contrary temper. How beautiful many of them were, we may conjecture from that which still remains; and that not only in the noblest creatures, but in those of the lowest

[18] Southey's Life of Wesley, chap. 20.

order. And they were all surrounded, not only with plen teous food, but with everything that could give them pleas ure; pleasure unmixed with pain; for pain was not yet; it had not entered into paradise. And they, too, were immor tal: for 'God made not death; neither hath he pleasure in the death of any living.'" [19]

But "as all the blessings of God in paradise flowed through man to the inferior creatures; as man was the great channel of communication between the Creator and the whole brute creation; so when man made himself incapable of transmitting those blessing, that communication was necessarily cut off. The intercourse between God and the inferior creatures being stopped, those blessings could no longer flow in upon them. And then it was that 'the creature,' every creature, 'was subjected to vanity,' to sorrow; to pain of every kind, to all manner of evils; not, indeed, 'willingly,' not by its own choice, not by any act or deed of its own, but 'by reason of him that subjected it,' by the wise permissions of God, determining to draw eternal good out of this temporary evil."

"But," he asks, "will 'the creature,' will even the brute creation always remain in this deplorable condition? God forbid that we should affirm this; yea, or even entertain such a thought! While 'the whole creation groaneth together,' (whether men attend or not,) their groans are not dispersed in idle air, but enter into the ears of Him that made them. While his creatures 'travail together in pain,' he knoweth all their pain, and is bringing them nearer and nearer to the birth, which shall be accomplished in its season. He seeth 'the earnest expectation' wherewith the whole animated creation 'waiteth for' that final 'manifestation of the sons of God;' in which 'they themselves also shall be delivered [not by annihilation; annihilation is not deliverance] from the [present] bondage of corruption, into [a measure of] the glorious liberty of the children of God.' Nothing can be more express; away with vulgar prejudices, and let

[19] Sermon on "The General Deliverance," Works, vol. ii.

the plain word of God take place. They shall be delivered from 'the bondage of corruption into glorious liberty;' even a measure, according as they are capable, of 'the liberty of the children of God.'"

"May I be permitted," he adds, "to mention here a conjecture concerning the brute creation? What if it should then please the all-wise, the all-gracious Creator, to raise them higher in the scale of beings? What if it should please him, when he makes us 'equal to angels,' to make them what we are now—creatures capable of God; capable of knowing, and loving, and enjoying the author of their being?"

Wesley believed that there was a regular gradation of creation from the animalcule to the archangel; "an opinion," says Southey, "confirmed by science as far as our physiological knowledge extends."[20] He also thought it probable, that each class in the series advances, and will forever advance, men taking the rank of angels, and brutes the rank of men, and eternal progress and felicity be thus the lot of all saved beings; an opinion for which we find no analogy in our later paleontological discoveries, for though they demonstrate the serial superiority of the organic creation, we have ascertained no transmutation of species.

Wesley believed that beings less bound than we, by material or local trammels, often intervene in our sphere, and may have relations of unsuspected intimacy with us. "Certainly," he said, "it is as easy for a spirit to speak to our hearts as for a man to speak to our ears." Evil spirits not only suggest evil thoughts to man, but sometimes inflict physical calamities, as in the days of Christ. "Deliver us from evil," in the Lord's Prayer, means in the Greek the "Evil One." Good spirits, or angels, minister not only to the souls, but to the external welfare of men. "May they not," he asks, "minister also to us, with respect to our bodies, in a thousand ways which we do not now understand? They may prevent our falling

[20] Southey's Wesley, chap. 20.

into many dangers, which we are not sensible of, and may deliver us out of many others, though we know not whence our deliverance comes. How many times have we been strangely and unaccountably preserved in sudden and dangerous falls! And it is well if we did not impute that preservation to chance, or to our own wisdom or strength. Not so: it was God who gave his angels charge over us, and in their hands they bore us up. Indeed, men of the world will always impute such deliverances to accident or second causes. To these, possibly, some of them might have imputed Daniel's preservation in the lion's den. But himself ascribes it to the true cause: 'My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths.' Dan. vi, 22."

In a letter to one of his correspondents he says: "It has in all ages been allowed that the communion of saints extends to those in paradise as well as those upon earth, as they are all one body united under one head. But it is difficult to say either what kind or what degree of union may be between them. It is not improbable their fellowship with us is far more sensible than ours with them. Suppose any of them are present, they are hid from our eyes, but we are not hid from their sight. They, no doubt, clearly discern all our words and actions, if not all our thoughts too. For it is hard to think that these walls of flesh and blood can intercept the view of an angelic being. But we have, in general, only a faint and indistinct perception of their presence, unless in some peculiar instances where it may answer some gracious ends of Divine providence."[21]

He has given us two sermons on this subject; if they betray some questionable theories, they are nevertheless admirable illustrations of the elevated and trustful temper of his heart.[22]

A curious subject, already alluded to, but postponed for further consideration, may be here appropriately recalled, as related to Wesley's views of preternatural agency in our

[21] Letter 688, Works, vol. vii.

[22] Sermons 76 and 77, on Good and Bad Angels, Works, vol. ii.

world.[23] He believed that the marvelous physical effects which often attended the religious excitement of his times were supernatural; he seems, however, to have had no decided opinion as to their moral character. His allusions to them are contradictory. After a thorough examination of cases at Newcastle he concluded, as has been shown, that they were demoniacal—a diabolical interference with the work of the Holy Spirit. It was Satan "tearing" the awakened "as they were coming to Christ." This was in 1743; but nearly forty years later (in 1781) he appears to have modified his opinion; he still believed they were preternatural, but supposed they were sometimes from good, at others from evil powers. "Satan," he says, "*mimicked* this part of the work of God, in order to discredit the whole; and yet it is not well to give up this part any more than to give up the whole."[24] The marvels under the ministrations of Berridge, at Everton, he believed were "at first wholly from God;" such effects, he adds, "are partly so at this day; he will enable us to discern how far, in every case, the work is pure, how far mixed." It should be borne in mind, however, that Wesley never confounded these phenomena with noise or clamor in public worship; the latter he unhesitatingly condemned. "Perhaps," he says, in one of his discourses,[25] "some may be afraid, lest the refraining from these warm expressions, or even gently checking them, should check the fervor of our devotion. It is very possible it may check, or even prevent, some kind

[23] See vol. i, pp. 126, 187.

[24] Short History of the Methodists, Works, vol. vii.

[25] Sermon on "Knowing Christ after the Flesh," Works, vol. ii. Adam Clarke equally condemned such clamors. In his commentary on 1 Cor. xiv, 33, he says: "Let not the persons who act in the congregation in this disorderly manner, say that they are under the influence of God; for he is not the author of confusion; but two, three, or more praying or teaching at the same place, at the same time, is confusion; and God is not the author of such work; and let men beware how they attribute such disorder to the God of order and peace. The Apostle calls such conduct *akatastasiai*—tumults, seditions; and such they are in the sight of God, and in the sight of all good men. How often is the work of God marred and discredited by the folly of men!"

of fervor which has passed for devotion. Possibly it may prevent loud shouting, horrid, unnatural screaming, repeating the same words twenty or thirty times, jumping two or three feet high, and throwing about the arms or legs, both of men and women, shocking not only to religion, but to common decency; but it will never check, much less prevent, true, Scriptural devotion."

History attests four facts respecting the physical phenomena of religious excitements.

First: That they have not been peculiar to Methodism. They occurred in the medieval Roman Church. They were not uncommon, before Wesley's day, in Scotland. Edwards has recorded them abundantly in his accounts of the great awakening in New England. Whitefield found that they were known in New Jersey before his arrival. The most remarkable instances have occurred among the Presbyterians in the American western states. The extraordinary scenes called the "jerks" began at one of their camp-meetings; they were rapid, jerking contortions, which seemed always to be the effect, direct or indirect, of religious causes, yet affected not only religious, but often the most irreligious minds. Violent opposers were sometimes seized by them; men with imprecations upon their lips were suddenly smitten with them. Drunkards attempting to drown the effect by liquors, could not hold the bottle to their lips; their convulsed arms would drop it, or shiver it against the surrounding trees. Horsemen, charging in upon camp-meetings to disperse them, were arrested by the strange affection at the very boundaries of the worshiping circles, and were the more violently shaken the more they endeavored to resist the inexplicable power. "If they would not strive against it, but pray in good earnest, the jerking would usually abate," says a witness who has seen more than five hundred persons "jerking" at one time in his large congregations.[26]

[26] Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, p. 48: "To see those proud young gentlemen and young ladies, dressed in their silks, jewelry, and

The nervous infection spread from one denomination to another, and prevailed as an endemic, if not as an epidemic.

Second: They were seldom or never followed by any morbid physical effects. They were sometimes prolonged enough to produce serious consequences, had they been the result of morbid causes. In the western American cases men, but oftener women, of apparently sound health, would lie motionless and insensible for not only a day, but sometimes during a week, without food or drink, and, on returning to consciousness, show no important physical derangement.[27] The most violent convulsions left little or no exhaustion.

Third: They have not yet been identified with any known diseased affections. They are a class by themselves, and appear inseparable from some personal or public *religious* cause. If not morbid they are certainly abnormal; but their symptoms are not identical with any other nervous affection in our recognized nosology.

Fourth: Though peculiar to religious causes, direct or indirect, they are in themselves physical affections. The most devout men have not been the most subject to them. They have not invariably been followed by moral results.

prunella, from top to toe, take the jerks, would often excite my risibilities. At the first jerk or so, you would see their fine bonnets, caps, and combs fly; and so sudden would be the jerking of the head that their long loose hair would crack almost as loud as a wagoner's whip." See also "Autobiography of a Pioneer," (Rev. Jacob Young,) and the "Rifle, Axe, and Saddlebags," by Rev. W. H. Milburn.

[27] Cartwright mentions one fatal case of the "jerks," but it was not from any physiological effect. "This large man cursed the jerks and all religion. Shortly afterward he took the jerks and started to run, but he jerked so powerfully he could not get away. He halted among some saplings, and, although he was violently agitated, he took out his bottle of whisky, and swore he would drink the jerks to death; but he jerked at such a rate that he could not get the bottle to his mouth, though he tried hard. At length he fetched a sudden jerk, and the bottle struck a sapling and was broken to pieces, and spilled his whisky on the ground. He became very much enraged and cursed and swore very profanely, his jerks still increasing. At length he fetched a very violent jerk, snapped his neck, fell, and soon expired, with his mouth full of cursing and bitterness."

They have attended the worst as well as the best forms of religion—fanatical heresies as well as orthodox teachings. We are indebted to a Methodist authority for our best solution of them. He defines them as "religious catalepsy,"[28] a suspension more or less of the functions of the cerebrum, attended by an abnormal activity of those of the cerebellum. The rational powers—the will, judgment or reason—are thus temporarily put in abeyance, and the involuntary susceptibilities left subject to the prevailing impression or influence. "To be thrown," he says, "into the cataleptic state in conversion, is no criterion of the genuineness of that change. The proof must be sought, and will be found, elsewhere. Religious catalepsy is not a safe standard by which to estimate a religious state, growth in grace, or personal piety in any stage of experience. Because the same amount of divine influence shed upon a person under one class of circumstances which would result in catalepsy, would, to another person in the same circumstances, and to the same person in other circumstances, be followed by no such result."

The progress of science will yet, doubtless, throw conclusive light on this difficult question; meanwhile the judicious advice heretofore quoted from a high Methodist authority[29] is approved by Methodists generally: that in no such cases should the occasional occurrence of noise and disorder be taken as a proof that an extraordinary work of grace is not being wrought in the hearts of men by the Spirit of God; that as far as possible they are to be repressed by a firm discipline, "for the power of the work does not lie in them;" and yet that discipline, though firm, should be discriminating, for the sake of the real blessing which at such seasons may be attending the administration of the truth.

In accordance with Wesley's opinion respecting preter-

[28] Religious Catalepsy, by Rev. Silas Comfort, in Methodist Quarterly Review for April, 1859.

[29] Richard Watson. See vol. i, p. 128 of this work.

natural agencies in our world were his views of Providence. The fact of a superintending Providence he held to be essential to the government of the world by a personal God. He discarded the usual distinctions between a general and special providence. "Admitting," he says, "that in the common course of nature God does act by general laws, he has never precluded himself from making exceptions to them whensoever he pleases, either by suspending a law in favor of those that love him, or by employing his mighty angels: by either of which means he can deliver out of all danger them that trust in him. 'What! you expect miracles, then?' Certainly I do, if I believe the Bible; for the Bible teaches me that God hears and answers prayer; but every answer to prayer is, properly, a miracle. For if natural causes take their course, if things go on in their natural way, it is no answer at all. . . . You say, 'You allow a general providence, but deny a particular one.' And what is a general, of whatever kind it be, that includes no particulars? Is not every general necessarily made up of its several particulars? Can you instance any general that is not? Tell me any genus, if you can, that contains no species? What is it that constiutes a genus, but so many species added together? What, I pray, is a whole that contains no parts? Mere nonsense and contradiction! Every whole must, in the nature of things, be made up of its several parts; insomuch that if there be no parts there can be no whole. . . . Nay, rather say, 'The Lord is loving to every man,' and his care 'is over all his works.' . . . Nothing is small in his sight that in any degree affects the welfare of any that fear God and work righteousness. What becomes, then, of your general providence, exclusive of a particular? Let it be forever rejected by all rational men as absurd, self-contradictory nonsense."[30]

[30] Sermon 72, on "Divine Providence," Works, vol. ii.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL ECONOMY OF METHODISM.

Providential Character of Methodism — Its Disciplinary System — Its gradual Development — Its Importance to New Countries — Its Success in the New World — Coincidence of the Rise of Methodism with the Origin of the Republic of the United States — Heroic Character of the early Methodist Preachers.

It is impossible to estimate the Methodistic movement aright, from either a Christian or a philosophic standpoint, without recognizing in it that directing Providence which has hitherto been so often and so strikingly revealed in our narrative. Methodism forms an extraordinary chapter in the history of Providence, and its disciplinary system is one of the most remarkable passages in that chapter. Time has proved its system to be the most efficient of all modern religious organizations, not only among the dispersed population of a new country, but also in the dense communities of an ancient people; on the American frontier, and in the English city, it is found efficacious beyond all other plans, stimulating most others, and yet outstripping them.

This singular system of religious instrumentalities was not devised. It was in but few respects the result of sagacious foresight: it grew up spontaneously, and Wesley's legislative wisdom shows itself not so much in inventing its peculiarities, as in appropriating skillfully the means which were providentially provided for him. Its elementary parts were evolved unexpectedly in the progress of the denomination. Wesley saw that the state of religion throughout the English nation required a thorough reform; God, he believed, would provide for whatever was necessary to be

done in such a necessity, if willing and earnest men would attempt to do it. He was ready to attempt it, and to be sacrificed for it. He looked not into the future, but consulted only the openings of his present duty.

He expected at first to keep within the restrictions of the national Church. The manner in which he was providentially led to adopt, one by one, the peculiar measures which at last consolidated into a distinct and unparalleled system, is an interesting feature in the history of Methodism, and worthy to be traced with more particular attention than we have hitherto been able to give it.

The doctrines which he preached, and the novel emphasis with which he preached them, led to his expulsion from the pulpits of the Establishment. This treatment, together with the great assemblies he attracted, compelled him to proclaim them *in the open air*—a measure which the moral wants of the country demanded, and which is justified, as well by the example of Christ as by its unquestionable results.

The inconvenience of the "rooms" occupied by his followers for spiritual meetings at Bristol, led to the erection of a more commodious edifice. This was a place of occasional preaching, then of regular worship, and finally, without the slightest anticipation of such a result, the first in *a series of chapels* which became the habitual resort of his followers, and thereby contributed more, perhaps, than any other cause to their organization into a distinct sect.

The debt incurred by this building rendered necessary *a plan of pecuniary contribution* among the worshipers who assembled in it. They agreed to pay a penny a week. They were divided into companies of twelve, one of whom, called the leader, was appointed to receive their pittances. At their weekly meetings, for the payment of this contribution, they found leisure for religious conversation and prayer. These companies, formed only for a local and temporary object, were afterward called *classes*, and the arrangement was incorporated into the permanent economy of Methodism. In this manner originated one of the most dis-

tinctive features of its system—the advantages of which are beyond estimation. The class-meeting has, more than any other means, preserved the original purity and vigor of Methodism. It is the best school of experimental divinity the world has seen in modern times. It has given a sociality of spirit and a disciplinary training to Methodism which have been characteristic of it, if not peculiar to it.

We cannot but admire the providential adaptation of this institution to another which was subsequently to become all-important in the Methodist economy—an *itinerant ministry*. Such a ministry could not admit of much local pastoral labor, especially in the New World, where the circuits were long. The class-leader became a substitute for the preacher in this department of his office. The fruits of an itinerant ministry must have disappeared in many, perhaps most places, during the long intervals which elapsed between the visits of the earlier preachers, had they not been preserved by the class-meeting. A small class has been the nucleus of almost every Church which Methodism has formed.

Another most important result of the class-meeting was the pecuniary provision it afforded for the prosecution of the plans which were daily enlarging under the hands of Wesley. The whole *fiscal system* of Methodism arose from the Bristol penny collections, modified at last into the "rule" of "a penny a week and a shilling a quarter." Thus, without foreseeing the great independent cause he was about to establish, Wesley formed, through a slight circumstance, a simple and yet most effective system of finance for the expenses which its future prosecution would involve. And admirably was this pecuniary system adapted to the circumstances of that cause. He was destined to raise up a great religious organization; it was to be composed chiefly of the poor, and yet to require large pecuniary resources. How were these resources to be provided among a poor people? The providential formation of a plan of finance which suited the poverty of the poorest, and which worldly sagacity would have contemned, banished all difficulty, and has led to pecu

niary results which have rarely if ever been equaled by any voluntary religious organization.

The itinerant lay ministry was equally providential in its origin. Wesley was at first opposed, as we have seen, to the employment of lay preachers.[1] He expected the co-operation of the regular clergy. They, however, were his most persistent antagonists. Meanwhile the small societies formed by his followers for spiritual improvement multiplied. "What," he says, "was to be done in a case of such extreme necessity, where so many souls lay at stake? No clergyman would assist at all. The expedient that remained was to seek some one among themselves who was upright of heart and of sound judgment in the things of God, and to desire him to meet the rest as often as he could, to confirm them, as he was able, in the ways of God, either by reading to them or by prayer or exhortation." From exhortation these men proceeded to exposition, from exposition to preaching. The result was natural, but it was not designed. Such was the origin of the Methodist *lay ministry*.

The multiplication of societies exceeded the increase of preachers. It thus became necessary that the latter should travel from town to town, and thence arose the *itineracy*, one of the most important features of the ministerial system of Methodism. It is not a labor-saving provision—quite the contrary—but a laborer-saving one. The pastoral service, which would otherwise have been confined to a single parish, was extended by this plan to scores of towns and villages, and, by the co-operation of the class-meeting, was rendered almost as efficient as it would have been were it local. It was this peculiarity that rendered the ministry of Methodism so successful in new countries. It also contributed, perhaps more than any other cause, to maintain a sentiment of unity among its people. It gave a pilgrim, a militant character to its preachers; they felt that "here they had no abiding city," and were led more earnestly to seek one out of sight. It would not allow them to entangle themselves with

[1] See vol., i, book ii, chapter 5.

local trammels. The cross peculiarly "crucified them to the world, and the world to them." Their zeal, rising into religious chivalry; their devotion to one work; their disregard for ease and the conveniences of stationary life, were owing largely to their itineracy. It made them one of the most self-sacrificing, laborious, practical, and successful bodies of men which has appeared in the great field of modern Christian labor. And it was the opinion of Wesley that the time when itineracy should cease in the ministry, and classes among the laity of Methodism, would be the date of its downfall.

These developments of the movement inevitably led to others. It was necessary that Wesley should advise his preachers; they met him annually for the purpose, and from such informal conferences arose the constitutional *Conference*—a body whose title has taken a prominent place in the ecclesiastical terminology of Christendom, among the names of councils, convocations, and synods. Its consultations at last originated the laws, defined the theology, and planned the propagandism of the denomination. Its Minutes, revised and reduced, became the *Methodist Discipline*.[2] It has reproduced itself in Ireland, in France and Germany, in the American Republic, in the British North American Provinces, in Australia, and in Africa; and it promises to be a perpetually if not universally recognized institution of the Protestant world.

With the erection of chapels arose the necessity of the appointment of *Trustees*, to hold their property. The finances of the societies rendered necessary the appointment of local *Stewards;* the multiplication of societies, the appointment of *Circuit Stewards*, to whom the local stewards became auxiliaries. The increase of business on the circuits led to the creation of the *Quarterly Meeting*, or Quarterly Conference as it is called in America, comprising the officers, lay and

[2] The "Large Minutes" was a compilation, made by Wesley, of the most important provisions of his Annual Conferences from 1744 to 1789. See this important tract in his Works, vol. v.

clerical, of the several societies of the circuit; and the *District Meeting* or Conference, combining several circuits. And thus, wheel within wheel, the system took form, and became a settled and powerful economy.

The importance of this system becomes still more striking when we consider its adaptation to the New World—to the immense fields of immigration and civilization which were about to be opened in not only North America, but in Oceanica, the "Island World," to which geographers give rank as the fifth division of the globe, and along whose now busy coasts Cook, the navigator, was furtively sailing while Wesley was founding Methodism in England.

It is a fact worthy of remark, that while the moral revolution of Methodism was going on in the Old World, the most important political revolution of modern times was in process in the New; and when we contemplate the new modes of religious activity which were evolved by the former, we cannot resist the conviction that there was a providential relation between the two events—that they were not only coincident in time, but also in purpose. While Wesley and his co-laborers were reviving Christianity in England, Washington and his compatriots were reviving popular government in America. It was the American Revolution that led to the development of the resources of the continent, and rendered it the assembling place of the nations; and Methodism commenced its operations sufficiently early to be in effective vigor by the time that the great movement of the civilized world toward the West had fully begun. In how many respects was it adapted to this emergency of the country! If we may judge from the result, it was raised up by Providence more in reference to the New than to the Old World. Its peculiar measures were especially suited to the circumstances of the former, while those of nearly every other contemporary sect lacked the necessary adaptation. Its zealous spirit readily blended with the buoyant sympathies of a youthful nation flushed with the sense of liberty. The usual process of a long preparatory training for the ministry could

not consist with the rapidly increasing wants of the country. Methodism called into existence a ministry less trained, but not less efficient; possessing in a surprising degree that sterling good sense and manly energy, examples of which great exigences always produce among the common people. These it imbued with its own energetic spirit, and formed them to a standard of character altogether unique in the annals of the modern Christian ministry. They composed a class which, perhaps, will never be seen again. They were distinguished by native mental vigor, shrewdness, extraordinary knowledge of human nature, many of them by overwhelming natural eloquence, the effects of which on popular assemblies are scarcely paralleled in the history of ancient or modern oratory, and not a few by powers of satire and wit, which made the gainsayer cower before them. To these intellectual attributes they added great excellences of the heart, a zeal which only burned more fervently where that of ordinary men would have grown faint, a courage that exulted in perils, a generosity which knew no bounds and left most of them in want in their latter days, a forbearance and co-operation with each other which are seldom found in large bodies, an entire devotion to one work, and, withal, a simplicity of character which extended even to their manners and their apparel. They were likewise characterized by rare physical abilities. They were mostly robust. The feats of labor and endurance which they performed in incessantly preaching in villages and cities, among slave huts and Indian wigwams; in journeyings, seldom interrupted by stress of weather; in fording creeks, swimming rivers, sleeping in forests; these, with the novel circumstances with which such a career frequently brought them into contact, afford examples of life and character which, in the hands of genius, might be the materials for a new department of romantic literature. They were men who labored as if the judgment fires were about to break out on the world and time to end with their day. They were precisely the men whom the moral wants of the New World at the time demanded.

The usual plan of local labor, limited to a single congregation or to a parish, was inadequate to the wants of Great Britain at this time, but much more so to those of the New World. The extraordinary scheme of an itinerant ministry met, in the only manner possible, the circumstances of the latter; and the men described were the only characters who could have sustained that scheme amid the hardships of American life. It would not be difficult to estimate what must have been the probable result of that rapid advancement which the population of the United States was making beyond the customary provisions for religious instruction, had not this novel plan met the emergency. Much of what was then its frontier, but has since become the most important states of the Confederacy, would have passed through the forming period of its character without the influence of Christian institutions. But the Methodist itineracy has borne the cross, not only in the midst, but in the van of the hosts of emigration. That impersonation of hardship, disinterestedness, and romantic adventure, the circuit preacher, was found with his horse and saddle-bags threading the trail of the savage, and cheering and blessing with his visits the loneliest cottage of the farthest West. The Methodist evangelists went as pioneers to the aboriginal tribes, and gathered into the pale of the Church more of the children of the forest than any other sect; they scaled the Rocky Mountains, and were laying the foundations of Christianity and civilization on the shores of the Columbia, even before the movement of emigration tended toward them; they have been hastening down toward the capital of Montezuma, while, throughout the length and breadth of the older states, they have spread a healthful religious influence which has affected all classes, so that their cause includes not only a larger aggregate population than any other religious body of the country, but especially a larger proportion of those classes whose moral elevation is the most difficult and the most important—the savage, the slave, the free negro, and the lower classes generally.' *

In no part of the earth has the practical system of Methodism taken a more thorough organization, or showed more vigor, than amid the moral exigencies of the New World. Its complex and yet harmonious constitution in the United States will hereafter be an interesting subject of discussion in our pages. Its General Conferences occurring once in four years, its Annual Conferences once a year, its Quarterly Conferences once in three months, its Leaders' Meetings once a month, its Class-meetings once a week, form a series of gradations extending from a week to four years, and covering all the successive intervals. To these correspond also its gradations of labor; Bishops traversing the continent; Presiding Elders traveling districts; Circuit and Stationed Preachers occupying less extensive fields, assisted by Local Preachers and Exhorters; and finally, Leaders inspecting, weekly, divisions of the local societies. This exact machinery is a chief cause of the energy and permanence of so diffuse and varied a system. And is it presumption to believe it providential that such a system was produced at such a time?

Such, then, is a general, or what may more properly be called a genetic view of the practical system of Methodism. A more definitive description of its individual parts, and of some of its adjunct usages and institutions, cannot fail to interest the student of ecclesiastical history.

CHAPTER III.

THE UNITED SOCIETY — CATHOLICITY OF METHODISM.

Origin of the United Society — The "General Rules" — They contain no Dogmatic Term of Membership — Did Wesley approve of Creeds? — Indicatory and Obligatory Creeds? — Wesley used the Words Society and Church as convertible Terms — His Idea of a True Church — He qualifies the Definition given in the Anglican Articles — His Definition of the "One Faith" — His gradual Organization of Methodism gave it the Form of a Church without changing the Terms of Communion — Theology as recognized in Wesley's Legal Deeds — Required as a Functional Qualification in the Ministry, but not as a Condition of Communion — Did he change the Terms of Membership in the American Societies by giving them Articles of Religion? — Were Wesley's Writings mutilated?

The first organized form of Methodism, according to Wesley himself, was the *United Society*, established in connection with the Foundry, in London, in the latter end of the year 1739.[1] It consisted, at its first meeting, of twelve persons; of forty at the second; and soon after of one hundred. It became the Methodist Church.

The basis of its organization was subsequently defined in "The General Rules," prepared by John and Charles Wesley.[2] These rules are the recognized terms of membership throughout the Methodist communion. They declare that no other "condition" than that which is therein defined "is previously required of those who desire admission to these Societies." They have already been stated in detail; they are remarkable as containing not a single dogmatic condition of communion.

[1] See vol. i, book ii, chap. 1, and Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 7.
[2] See them in vol. i, book ii, chap. 5.

A fact so extraordinary is well worthy of consideration, not merely as an example of the evangelical liberality of Wesley, but as an illustration of his views of Christian fellowship.

Was he opposed to creeds? Certainly not, as convenient summaries of theology; nor as indicatory standards of belief in religious communions. He could not have doubted that they had been bulwarks to the faith in critical periods of the Church. But if he could approve them as *indicatory* standards of truth, did he also approve them as *obligatory* standards? Has he left Methodism to the world, without an obligatory dogmatic platform, so far as its terms of communion are concerned?—differing thus, not only from almost every other important prior or contemporaneous body in ecclesiastical history, but also anticipating, perilously or beneficially, that basis for a future Protestant catholicity which not a few commanding minds, either from a higher than ordinary ideal of Christianity, or from a questionable liberalism, have asserted to be one of the capital wants of modern Protestantism?

On a question of such grave importance, in the estimation of many good men, and on which Wesley's example would be liable to so much abuse by rationalistic liberalists on the one hand, and fastidious dogmatists on the other, it is befitting that the historian should speak with caution, if not with diffidence. But it is obvious enough that Wesley did not make theological opinions a condition of membership in his own society. This is manifest, not only in his "General Rules," but by assertions and facts, of continual recurrence in the preceding pages. But do we herein have his opinion of what should be the ground or right of membership in a properly constituted Christian Church? It is often remarked that he formed societies, not Churches. The assertion is in one sense historically correct, but the inferences usually drawn from it are illogical, and would not have been admitted by Wesley himself. He did not at first believe it was God's design, in raising up the Methodists, that they

should form a new sect; he did not like that term, and he wished not his people to stand isolated from other Christian bodies; but he followed the openings of Providence in giving them the provisions and forms which he saw were gradually consolidating them into a distinct body. He wished them not to call themselves "the Church," as arrogating to themselves an uncharitable distinction, and unnecessarily placing themselves apart from existing Churches; but in his Conference of 1749, when defining a plan for the more intimate combination of his societies, and their closer relation to that of London, he himself calls them "Churches." "May not that in London, the mother Church, consult for the good of all the Churches?"[3] "I still aver," he says, in his eighty-sixth year, after he had given a Constitution and Ordination to his cause, "I still aver, I have never read or heard of, either in ancient or modern history, any *other* Church which builds on so broad a foundation as the Methodists do; which requires of its members no conformity, either in opinion or modes of worship, but barely this one thing—to fear God and work righteousness."[4] In thus contrasting his Society with "other" Churches, he certainly assumes that it was itself a Church. He wished not his preachers to be called "ministers," any more than he wished his American *episcopoi* to be called bishops; but he unquestionably made the former ministers, and the latter bishops, by his ordinations, by which the former were authorized to administer the sacraments, and the latter to provide men to administer them.

A question preliminary to the present inquiry is, What did he consider a true Church? He has answered that question with precision: "What do you mean by the Church? A visible Church (as our Article defines it) is a company of faithful or believing people; *cœtus credentium.* This is the essence of a Church; and the properties thereof are, (as they are described in the words that follow,)

[3] Minutes of Conferences, vol. i, p. 39. London, 1812.
[4] Journal, Aug. 26, 1789, Works vol. iv, p. 729.

'among whom the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered.'"[5]

He has left us an important sermon on "The Church," and another on "Schism."[6] "How much," he says in the former, "do we almost continually hear about the Church! With many it is a matter of daily conversation. And yet how few understand what they talk of; how few know what the term means! A more ambiguous word than this, the *Church*, is scarce to be found in the English language. It is sometimes taken for a building set apart for public worship; sometimes for a congregation or body of people united together in the service of God. It is only in the latter sense that it is taken in the ensuing discourse. It may be taken indifferently for any number of people, how small or great soever. As, 'where two or three are met together in his name,' there is Christ; so, (to speak with St. Cyprian,) where two or three believers are met together, there is a Church.' Thus it is that St. Paul, writing to Philemon, mentions "the Church which was in his house,' plainly signifying that even a Christian family may be termed a Church. Several of those whom God hath called out of the world, (so the original word properly signifies,) uniting together in one congregation, formed a larger Church; as the Church at Jerusalem; that is, all those in Jerusalem whom God had so called."

And, again, he says: "Here, then, is a clear, unexceptionable answer to that question, What is the Church? The catholic or universal Church is all the persons in the universe whom God hath so called out of the world as to entitle them to the preceding character; as to be 'one body,' united by 'one Spirit;' having 'one faith, one hope, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all.' That part of this great body of the universal Church which inhabits any one kingdom or nation, we may properly term a national Church; as, the

[5] Earnest Appeal, etc., Works, vol. v, p. 24.
[6] Sermons 79 and 80. Works, vol. ii, pp. 154–167.

Church of France, the Church of England, the Church of Scotland. A smaller part of the universal Church, are the Christians that inhabit one city or town; as the Church of Ephesus, and the rest of the seven Churches mentioned in the Revelation. Two or three Christian believers united together are a Church in the narrowest sense of the word. Such was the Church in the house of Philemon, and that in the house of Nymphas, mentioned Col. iv, 15. *A particular Church may, therefore, consist of any number of members, whether two or three, or two or three millions.* But still, whether they be larger or smaller, the same idea is to be preserved. They are one body; and have one Spirit, one Lord, one hope, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all."

According to this definition, Wesley must have considered his own congregations or societies as real Churches. If "two or three Christian believers united together are a Church;" if "several of those whom God hath called out of the world, uniting together in one congregation, formed a larger Church;" if "a particular Church may consist of any number of members, whether two or three, or two or three millions," what were his societies but Churches?

In his sermon on "Schism" he accordingly uses interchangeably the terms "Church" and "society," as he had in the Minutes of his Conference. After defining schism as Scripturally meaning divisions in a Church, but popularly meaning secession from it, he admonishes his people against the latter as well as the former, as a sin against God. "Suppose," he says, "the Church or society to which I am now united does not require me to do anything which the Scripture forbids, or to omit anything which the Scripture enjoins, it is then my indispensable duty to continue therein. And if I separate from it, without any such necessity, I am justly chargeable (whether I foresaw them or not) with all the evils consequent upon that separation. I have spoken the more explicitly upon this head because it is so little understood; because so many of those who profess much religion,

nay, and really enjoy a measure of it, have not the least conception of this matter, neither imagine such a separation to be any sin at all. They leave a Christian society with as much unconcern as they go out of one room into another. Do not rashly tear asunder the sacred ties which unite you to any Christian society. This indeed is not of so much consequence to you who are only a nominal Christian, for you are not now vitally united to any of the members of Christ. Though you are called a Christian, you are not really a member of any Christian Church. But if you are a living member, if you live the life that is hid with Christ in God, then take care how you rend the body of Christ, by separating from your brethren. O beware, I will not say of *forming*, but of *countenancing* or *abetting* any *parties* in a Christian society! Never encourage, much less cause, either by word or action, any division therein. Happy is he that attains the character of a peace-maker in the Church of God. Why should not you labor after this? Be not content not to stir up strife; but do all that in you lies to prevent or quench the very first spark of it."

Obviously, then, Wesley, in forming societies within the Establishment, must have considered himself as forming spiritual Churches within the national Church. In his sermon on "The Church" he expressly distinguishes national Churches from congregational or spiritual Churches. He adhered to the national Church as a constitutional institution of his country, but recognized all combinations of good men for the service of God, whether within or without the Establishment, as Scriptural Churches. He dissents from the strict definition of a Church given in the nineteenth Article of the Establishment. He says: "But the definition of a Church, laid down in the Article, includes not only this, but much more by that remarkable addition: 'In which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered.' According to this definition those congregations in which the pure word of God (a strong expression) is not preached are no parts either of the Church of England

or the Church catholic; as neither are those in which the sacraments are not duly administered. I will not undertake to defend the accuracy of this definition. I dare not exclude from the Church catholic all those congregations in which any unscriptural doctrines, which cannot be affirmed to be 'the pure word of God,' are sometimes, yea, frequently preached; neither all those congregations in which the sacraments are not 'duly administered.' Certainly if these things are so, the Church of Rome is not so much as a part of the Catholic Church: seeing therein neither is 'the pure word of God' preached, nor the sacraments 'duly administered.' Whoever they are that have 'one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all,' I can easily bear with their holding wrong opinions, yea, and superstitious modes of worship; nor would I, on these accounts, scruple still to include them within the pale of the Catholic Church; neither would I have any objection to receive them, if they desired it, as members of the Church of England."

Such was the brave, truth-loving spirit of John Wesley—arrayed in the robes of the Church of England, defending that Church at every point he could, yet magnanimously asserting the claims of truth and charity whenever its Articles compromised them! It is a blessing to the world that such a man must live and speak forever in its history.

But it may be asked, Does he not here require dogmatic opinions? does he not acknowledge "one faith" to be essential to the Church? He answers for himself in his sermon on "The Church:" "'There is one faith;' which is the free gift of God, and is the ground of their hope. This is not barely the faith of a heathen; namely, a belief that 'there is a God,' and that he is gracious and just, and consequently 'a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' Neither is it barely the faith of a devil; though this goes much farther than the former: for the devil believes, and cannot but believe, all that is written both in the Old and New Testaments to be true. But it is the faith of St. Thomas, teaching him to say with holy boldness, 'My Lord, and my

God.' It is the faith which enables every true Christian believer to testify with St. Paul: 'The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'"

The "one faith" was not, then, dogmatic faith, but the faith which is the Scriptural condition of justification, and the habitual condition of spiritual life. Such a faith, of course, presupposed certain elementary theological opinions, but it was not definitions or discriminations of these opinions that Wesley required; to him an earnest, devout life implied them as much as the "one faith" presupposed them. He accepted the life as a better evidence of them than any technical declaration. Methodism, in other words, reversed, as has been stated,[6] the usual policy of religious sects which seek to preserve their spiritual life by their orthodoxy; it maintained its orthodoxy by its spiritual life; and it presents to the theological world the anomalous spectacle of a widespread Church, which for more than a hundred years has had no serious disturbance from heresy.

In this respect, as in others, it may have a special mission in the religious world, and for the ages to come.

Wesley seems to have perceived that unnecessary discriminative requirements of opinions are the most effectual means of provoking heterodoxy into existence, by challenging the doubts or curiosity of speculative minds—that the continual scenting out of heresy by the Church is the surest means of producing it, as the persecution of doubtful opinions has usually strengthened and spread them.

While, therefore, he paused not in the beginning to anticipate whether the associations of his people would become permanent Churches, or even permanent societies, it would seem impossible to doubt that, according to his definition of a Church, they did become, in his own estimation, a genuine Church, and that, in gradually giving them, as providential circumstances required, an organic form, under which the preaching of "the pure word of God" and "the sacraments

[6] Vol. i, book i, chap. 1.

duly administered" were provided for them, he conceded their just claim to that character, though he wished them not to be dislocated, as such, from the national Establishment, which to him was a spiritual Church only in its spiritually-minded membership, and beyond this only an ecclesiastico-political institution.[7]

This interpretation of Wesley's views respecting the nature of a true Church, and the character of his own societies, is confirmed, it would seem, beyond a doubt, by the history of his own course, especially in the latter part of his life.

His societies included hundreds, and, at last, thousands of Dissenters. They joined him because of their dissatisfaction with the religious tenets of their respective sects, as well as for other considerations. They were unwilling to continue in their old communions, and were equally unwilling to enter the national Church. Did he then consider them as belonging to no Church, while living and dying in his own societies?

At first he knew not what consistence or form his own societies would take; he had no anxiety on that point; he left it to the Providence which, he believed, was directing him. But we have seen him taking step after step for their more thorough organization. He and his clerical associates administer to them the sacraments in their own humble preaching-houses; and he allows them, at last, to worship in their chapels during "church hours." Are the sacraments "duly administered" essential to a true Church? He would qualify the phrase, yet he ordains lay preachers to duly administer them to his societies in Scotland, and then in America, and finally in England itself. Did he, then, still believe that they were "societies," but not Churches?

He completes their organization, at last, by a discipline and constitution, and provides for their permanent existence, but never changes their terms of membership, as recorded

[7] So he expressly declares in his Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, (Works, vol. v,) and his Sermon on the Church. See also a remarkable passage bearing directly on this whole question, in his Plain Account of the People called Methodists, (written as early as 1748,) sect. i, 1, Works, vol. v.

in the "General Rules;" never inserts a dogmatic requirement in that document; and in his last years more than ever boasts of the liberality of his system. Did he not, then, consider the "General Rules" as a sufficient basis of Church communion?

But did he not provide a standard of doctrines for his people? Do not the deeds of his churches and the courts of England recognize his Notes on the New Testament and a portion of his Sermons as that standard?

Unquestionably he did believe in the expediency of such standards; he was too wise a man for the liberalism which would dispense with them; but the question recurs, whether he approved them as obligatory, or as merely indicatory standards. Good men, inquiring for a fitting place of religious communion, could see in the theological standards of Methodism what doctrines they would be likely to hear from its pulpits. They could thereby judge whether its societies would be suitable sanctuaries for them and their families. They found, however, but "one condition" required for admission to its communion—that defined in its "General Rules." Their honest individual difficulties or differences of opinion were not to expose them to the liability of arrest or excommunication; no "subscription" to human forms of expression was demanded; their moral conduct respecting their opinions, as respecting anything else, could alone so expose them. They must not wrangle, but pray; they must not meet for disputation, but for fellowship and charity.

While Wesley thus sacredly maintained the catholicity of Church communion, he nevertheless guarded with care the theology of Methodism, so far as its public teachers were concerned. His Notes, and some of his Sermons, were made standards in this respect. This was in fact necessary for his catholic purpose; for what could more effectually promote theological variations and dissensions, among his people, than continual variations or contradictions in their public instruction?

This theological uniformity of the pulpit was however but a *functional* requisition—a condition of admission to the ministry, but not to the Church. Methodism has similar functional discriminations for its offices of Leader, Exhorter, Local Preacher. A lack of intellectual ability, an impediment of speech, would be a disqualification for these functional responsibilities, but not for Church communion.

It is a noteworthy fact that, in providing for the organization of American Methodism, Wesley did not change the "General Rules" as the basis of membership, though he prepared for it "Articles of Religion." This interesting historical fact is full of significance, as an example of that distinction between indicatory and obligatory standards of theological belief which Methodism has, perhaps, had the honor of first exemplifying among the leading Churches of the modern Christian world. The "Articles of Religion" and the "General Rules" are both parts of the constitutional law of American Methodism; but the General Rules still prescribe the "only condition" of membership, and mention not the Articles or any other dogmatic symbols. Conformity to the doctrines of the Church is required as a functional qualification for the ministry, but Church members cannot be excluded for personal opinions while their lives conform to the practical discipline of the Church; they can be tried and expelled for "sowing dissensions in the societies by inveighing against their doctrines or discipline;" that is, in other words, not for their opinions, but for their moral conduct respecting their opinions. They cannot be expelled for anything short of defects which "are sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory."[8] And at what would Wesley himself have more revolted than the assumption that opinions, not affecting the Christian conduct of a member of his society, were "sufficient to exclude him from the kingdom of grace and glory?"[9]

[8] Discipline of Methodist Episcopal Church, part i, chap. 8, sect. 4.

[9] Such, it will scarcely be questioned, is the right of communion possessed by a person *already in* the Methodist Episcopal Church; but it

It would seem impossible indeed that any other view than the foregoing could be compatible with Wesley's frequent and emphatic declarations in favor of the liberty of thought. The man who declared to his assembled preachers, "I have no more right to object to a man for holding a different opinion from my own, than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair, though I have a right to object if he shakes the powder about my eyes," could hardly approve subscription to opinions as essential to the right of membership in the Church of Christ. We have noticed repeatedly his generous boast that "one circumstance is quite peculiar to the Methodists: the terms upon which any person may be admitted into their society. They do not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions whatever." Members of any denomination, or of none, can enter the spiritual Church which he organized, provided they possess the necessary moral qualifications. "One condition," he continues, "and one only, is required—a real desire to save their souls. Where this is, it is enough; they desire no more. They lay stress upon nothing else.

has sometimes been a question whether doctrinal opinions are not required for *admission* by the administrative prescription adopted since Wesley's day: (Discipline, part i, chap. 2, sec. 2) "*Let none be received until they shall, on examination by the Minister in charge before the Church, give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their faith and their willingness to keep the rules.*" It may be replied, 1. That, according to Wesley's definition above, of the faith essential to a true Church, there could be no difficulty here. 2. That, as the requisition is merely an administrative one for the preachers, and prescribes not what are to be "satisfactory assurances," etc., the latter are evidently left to the discretion of the pastor, and the requirement is designed to afford him the opportunity of further instructing the candidate, or of receiving from him pledges that his opinions shall not become a practical abuse in the society. 3. If the rule amounts to more than this, it would probably be pronounced, by good judges of Methodist law, incompatible with the usages and general system of Methodism, an oversight of the General Conference which enacted it, and contrary to the "General Rules," as guarded by the Restrictive Rules. 4. It would be a singular and inconsistent fact, that opinions should be made a condition of *admission* to the Church, but not of responsibility (except in their practical abuse) with persons already *in* the Church.

They ask only, is thy heart herein as my heart? If it be, give me thy hand."

Such was Wesley's "United Society," such the Church of Methodism, and as such, is it not a reproduction of the Church of the Apostolic age, and a type of "the Church of the future?"[10]

[10] The chief difficulty among "Churchmen," respecting Wesley's view of his United Society, arises from the fact that they have not appreciated his distinction between a simple, spiritual Church and a national Church. His tenacious regard for the latter, as existing in his country, has led them to disbelieve that he recognized the former as existing in his own United Society. They have even accused his successors of mutilating some of his writings which favor the Establishment. Alexander Knox, who venerated Wesley, has (Appendix to Southey's Wesley, vol. ii, page 362, American edition) charged them with "mutilating" an entry in his Journal for Oct. 24, 1786, and of canceling a passage for Jan. 2, 1787, which he affirms were in the original editions. He says, "that in every edition subsequent to Wesley's death the former passage is mutilated, and the latter wholly canceled." The reader will find these very passages precisely given in all the editions, American and English, of Wesley's Works since his death! Knox also accuses the publishers of suppressing Wesley's Sermon on "The Ministerial Office." By turning to any edition, American or English, of Wesley's Sermons, this very sermon will be found numbered one hundred and thirty; and Moore, in his Life of Wesley, published as early as 1792, one year after the death of Wesley, makes special comments on it. I cannot account for Knox's extraordinary mistake; the bitterness of his false charge is accountable enough on the ground of his high churchmanship. "Their suppression," he says, "is remarkable not only for the wily policy of the act itself, but also as it serves to illustrate the kind of influence under which Mr. Wesley was placed during the last years of his life:" a favorite supposition of Churchmen, which has been sufficiently refuted in these volumes.

CHAPTER IV.

ECONOMY, INSTITUTIONS, AND USAGES OF METHODISM.

Origin of the Class — Its great Importance — Not a Confessional — The Tesseræ or Tickets — The Band — The Agape or Love-Feast — Origin and Ceremonies of the Watch-Night — Renewal of the Covenant — Methodism originates the modern Lay Prayer-Meeting — The Steward — Wesley's Rules for the Office — The Lay Ministry — Its Itinerancy — Number of Circuits — Training of the Itinerants — Wesley advises about their physical Habits — Against Screaming — Thomas Walsh — Supernumerary and Superannuated Preachers — The Preachers' Fund — Sufferings of the early Ministry — Statistics — An Itinerant among Robbers — Good-Humor of the early Preachers — Local Preachers — Wesley established the first Dispensary in London — His Home for the Poor — His Poor Man's Aid Fund — He founds the Stranger's Friend Society.

The United Society was the original form, and Church, of Methodism, but the Class, as we have seen, has usually been its germinal form; for though the Class was introduced subsequently to the Society, it has in most places been the beginning of the latter. Attendance at the Class-meeting is made one of the terms of Church membership, in the General Rules. Wesley himself has recorded its origin.[1] Such were the incongruous elements gathered into his societies, chiefly from the neglected masses of the people, that he found much difficulty in maintaining strict moral discipline among them. "We groaned," he says, "under these inconveniences long before a remedy could be found. The people were scattered so widely in all parts of the town, from Wapping to Westminster, that I could not easily see what the behavior of each person in his own neighborhood was, so that several disorderly walkers did much hurt before I was apprized of it. At length, while we

[1] Plain Account of the People called Methodists, Works, vol. v.

were thinking of quite another thing, we struck upon a method for which we have had cause to bless God ever since." He was talking with members of the society in Bristol concerning the means of paying the chapel debts, when one stood up and said, "Let every member of the society give a penny a week till all are paid." Another answered, "But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it." "Then," said the first, "put eleven of the poorest with me, and if they can give anything, well: I will call on them weekly; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbors weekly; receive what they give, and make up what is wanting." It was done. Soon some of these leaders informed Wesley that they found members who did not live as they should. "It struck me," he says, "immediately, this is the thing, the very thing we have wanted so long." He called together all the leaders, and desired that each would make a particular inquiry into the conduct of those whom he saw weekly. They did so, and many disorderly members were detected. Some turned from the error of their ways. Some were expelled from the society. "Many saw it with fear, and rejoiced unto God with reverence." As soon as possible, the same method was used in London and other places. Evil men were detected and reproved. They were borne with for a season. If they forsook their sins, they were retained gladly; "if they obstinately persisted, it was openly declared that they were not of us. The rest mourned and prayed for them, and yet rejoiced that, as far as in us lay, the scandal was rolled away from the society."

It is the duty of the Leaders, 1. To see each person in his Class once a week at the least, in order to inquire respecting his spiritual condition; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require, and to receive what he is willing to give toward the relief of the poor and the support of the Gospel. 2. To meet the minister and the stewards of the society, in order to report to the former any that are sick, or any that are disorderly and will not

be reproved, and to pay to the stewards what they have received from their several Classes in the week preceding.

At first they visited each person at his own house; but this was soon found inexpedient. It took up more time than most of the leaders had to spare. Many persons lived with masters, mistresses, or relatives who would not suffer such visits. At the houses of those who were not so averse, they often had no opportunity of speaking to them except in company; and this did not answer the end proposed, of exhorting, comforting, or reproving. It frequently happened that one affirmed what another denied, and this could not be cleared up without seeing them together. Little misunderstandings and quarrels of various kinds sometimes arose among kindred or neighbors, effectually to remove which, it was needful to see the parties face to face. Upon all these considerations it was agreed that the members of each Class should meet together, and by this means a fuller inquiry was made into the conduct of every person. Those who could not be visited at home, or otherwise than in company, had the same advantage with others. Advice or reproof was given as necessity required, misunderstandings removed, and, after an hour or two thus spent, they concluded with prayer and thanksgiving.

"It can scarce be conceived," writes Wesley, "what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to 'bear one another's burdens,' and naturally to 'care for each other.' As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for each other. And 'speaking the truth in love, they grew up into him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplied, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, increased unto the edifying itself in love.'"

Thus did one of the most important means of the moral

power of Methodism originate in a work of pecuniary charity. It has been not only a chief feature of the moral discipline of the denomination, but its financial utility has been incalculable. When the debt which gave it birth at Bristol was liquidated, the weekly contribution was continued and paid by the leaders to the stewards, at first for the poor; but when the lay ministry arose, the Classes became the source of its financial support, and have ever since been such in most of the Methodistic world. The Class rule of a "penny a week and a shilling a quarter," has been effectively, as we have seen, the basis of Methodist finance.

The Class-leaders, appointed by the pastor, (for their duties are pastoral) inspected the society individually and weekly; and reported to him the result of this inspection weekly, in our day monthly; a more effectual means of discipline could hardly be conceived.

The extensive propagandism of Methodism could never have been prosecuted without its ministerial itinerancy, but its itineracy could never have secured the moral discipline, or even the permanence of its societies, without the pastoral care of the Class-leader, in the absence of the pastor, who at first was scarcely a day at a time in any one place.

The objection that such meetings are a species of popish confessional, has never been alleged by any one who has attended them. Their leaders are laymen; their members are obliged to relate nothing but what they please respecting their moral condition, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find an example of their abuse in this respect.

Wesley borrowed from the ancient Church an important usage in connection with the Class-meeting. He issued printed tickets to their members, small cards bearing a pointed text of Scripture, and often also a symbolical engraving: an anchor for hope; a guardian angel; a Bible encircled by a halo; Christ washing the feet of his disciples. The ticket was renewed quarterly, and dated, and inscribed with the name of the bearer. It admitted him to the Love-feast, and was, in fine, his certificate of member-

ship in the society;[2] and if he was unfaithful, he was dismissed by a refusal of the preacher to renew it. Those who bore these tickets, (*συμβολα* or *tesseræ*, as the ancients termed them, being of the same force with the *επιστολαι συστατικαι*, commendatory letters, mentioned by the apostle,) wherever they came, were acknowledged by their brethren, and received with cordiality. By them it was also easily distinguished, when the society were to meet apart, who were members of it and who not.

The Band-meeting was copied by Wesley from the Moravians. It was adopted by him at Bristol, before the formation of the United Society in London, but was not recognized in the General Rules as an organic part of Methodism, and, from Wesley's own account of it, would seem not to have been generally introduced till it was found desirable as a supplement to the Class. Many members of Classes desired a means of closer communion; they wished to consult one another without reserve, particularly with regard to the sin which did still easily beset them, and the temptations which were most apt to prevail over them. "They were," says Wesley, "the more desirous of this when they observed that it was the express advice of an inspired writer: 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.'" In compliance with their desire, he divided them into smaller companies; putting the married or single men, and married or single women, together. They pledged themselves that: "In order to 'confess our faults one to another,' and pray one for another that we may be healed, we intend, 1. To meet once a week at the least. 2. To come punctually at the hour appointed. 3. To begin with singing or prayer. 4. To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or

[2] In 1765 it became a rule to give a distinct certificate or "Note of Removal," signed by the preacher, to members removing into other circuits Methodism in the Congleton Circuit, by Rev. L. R. Dyson, p. 103. London, 1856.

deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting. 5. To desire some person among us (thence called a leader) to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations." That their design in meeting might be the more effectually answered, Wesley desired all the male bands to meet him or his preacher every Wednesday evening, and the women on Sunday, that they might receive such particular instructions and exhortations as, from time to time, might appear to be most needful for them; that such prayers might be offered as their necessities should require, and praise returned for whatever mercies they had received.

The Band was more obnoxious to objection than the Class meeting. There is no evidence, however, that it was attended by any important abuse; but as it was not enjoined in the General Rules, and was mostly superseded by the Class, it has generally fallen into disuse, and its rules have been repealed in the American Church.

The members of the societies assembled once a quarter to celebrate the ancient Agape or Love-feast. "They met," says Wesley, "that they might 'eat bread' together, as the ancient Christians did, 'with gladness and singleness of heart.' At these Love-feasts (so we termed them, retaining the name, as well as the thing, which was in use from the beginning) our food is only a little plain cake and water. But we seldom return from them without being fed, not only with the 'meat which perisheth,' but with 'that which endureth to everlasting life.'"

Before the introduction of Methodism into Kingswood, the depraved colliers used to spend the last night of the year in drunken revels and Bacchanalian songs. The Methodists changed these meetings into religious festivals. Wesley was advised to put an end to them; "but," he says, "upon weighing the thing thoroughly, and comparing it with the practice of the ancient Christians, I could see no cause to forbid it. Rather, I believed it might be made of more gen-

eral use; so I sent them word that I designed to watch with them on the Friday nearest the full moon, that we might have light thither and back again. I gave public notice of this the Sunday before, and, withal, that I intended to preach; desiring they, and they only, would meet me there who could do it without prejudice to their business or families. On Friday abundance of people came. I began preaching between eight and nine, and we continued till a little beyond the noon of night, singing, praying, and praising God. This we have continued to do once a month ever since in Bristol, London, and Newcastle, as well as Kingswood, and exceeding great are the blessings we have found therein; it has generally been an extremely solemn season, when the word of God sunk deep into the heart, even of those who till then knew him not. If it be said, 'This was only owing to the novelty of the thing, (the circumstance which still draws such multitudes together at those seasons,) or perhaps to the awful silence of the night,' I am not careful to answer in this matter. Be it so: however, the impression then made on many souls has never since been effaced. Now, allowing that God did make use either of the novelty, or any other indifferent circumstance, in order to bring sinners to repentance, yet they are brought. And herein let us rejoice together."

The redeemed colliers of Kingswood are annually commemorated throughout the Methodist world by this solemn festival. One or more sermons, with hymns and prayers, occupy the last hours of the year till a few minutes before midnight; the assemblies then bow in silent prayer till the clock strikes the end of the old year and the advent of the new; when, rising with a song of praise, or a covenant hymn, they disperse quietly to their homes. These meetings are public, and their supposed possible evils are unknown, except in the conjectures of writers who have never witnessed them.[3]

[3] Southey's objections, (Life of Wesley, chap. 21) have had existence only in his book, or in the imaginations of his readers.

In 1755 Wesley began the custom, still observed in many of his societies, of "Renewing the Covenant" on the first Sunday of the year. He explained its importance to his London societies, on successive mornings, before the solemn day arrived. A fast was also previously observed. He read in the public assembly a form of covenant from the writings of Richard Alleine, and calling upon all who would sincerely pledge it before God to stand up, eighteen hundred persons rose to their feet. "Such a sight," he writes "I never saw before; surely the fruit of it shall remain forever."

The modern introduction of the custom of public lay Prayer-meetings has been attributed to the influence of Methodism.[4] Occasions of social prayer have doubtless always existed in the Church, in one form or another; but in modern times, before the advent of Methodism, they were usually conducted by clergymen or church officers exclusively, and were hardly a stated part of religious service. They now became general, and have since become a regular and essential usage of evangelical Churches throughout the world. The psalmody and the animation of Methodism gave them peculiar effectiveness, and, wherever they have extended, its lay piety and talent find in them a stated and powerful means of usefulness.

Wesley also established meetings for Penitents or backsliders, and Select Societies for persons who were especially interested in the subject of Christian perfection, but neither became permanent institutions of Methodism.

The office of Trustee has been sufficiently stated; it involved simply the holding and management of the chapels of the Connection, and the property appertaining to them. To the office of Steward pertained the management of the other finances of the body. The Steward received and appropriated the contributions of the Classes for the support of the ministry, the Love-feast collection for the poor, and

[4] Smith's Hist. of Meth., vol. i, book iii, chap. 2. Porter's Compend. of Meth., part iv, chap. 6.

all charities not appropriate to the trustees. The office arose, like most others in the economy of Methodism, from what would be called an accidental cause. The persons who persuaded Wesley to open the Foundry for worship proposed to contribute to his support; he declined their offer, for his college fellowship afforded him all the income he needed. They insisted upon giving some financial aid to the new church. "Then I asked," he writes, "Who will take the trouble of receiving this money, and paying it where it is needful? One said, I will do it, and keep the account for you; so here was the first Steward. Afterward I desired one or two more to help me as Stewards, and in process of time a greater number." He was not willing that the Steward should be considered merely a financial officer; as entrusted with the charities of the Church, like the ancient Diaconate, he would have the office consecrated by the best piety of his laity. In 1747 he prescribed for the Stewards minute rules. 1. They were to be men full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, that they might do all things in a manner acceptable to God. 2. To be present every Tuesday and Thursday morning, in order to transact the temporal affairs of the society. 3. To begin and end every meeting with earnest prayer for a blessing on all their undertakings. 4. To produce their accounts on the first Tuesday in every month, that they might be transcribed into the ledger. 5. Each to be chairman in turn, month by month; the chairman to see that all the rules be punctually observed, and immediately to check him who breaks any of them. 6. To do nothing without the consent of the minister, either actually had or reasonably presumed. 7. To consider, whenever they meet, "God is here." Therefore to be serious, to utter no trifling word, to speak as in his presence, and to the glory of his great name. 8. When anything was debated to let one at a time stand up and speak, the rest giving attention, and to let him speak just loud enough to be heard, in love, and in the spirit of meekness. 9. Continually to pray and endeavor that a devout harmony might in all things subsist

among them: that in every step they might keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. 10. In all debates to watch over their tempers, avoiding all clamor and contention; being "swift to hear, slow to speak;" in honor, every man preferring another before himself. 11. If they could not relieve they should not grieve the poor, but give them kind words, if nothing else—to abstain from either sour looks or harsh language; to make them glad to come, even though they should go empty away; to put themselves in the place of every poor man, and to deal with him as they would God should deal with them.

In 1743 Wesley appointed visitors of the sick, as assistants to the Stewards, and gave them special rules;[5] but this office has since been superseded by voluntary organizations in the Churches.

Next to the United Society, with its Classes, the great fact of the ecclesiastical system of Methodism was its Itinerant Lay Ministry. Its origin and many of its disciplinary regulations have already been stated. Wesley early saw what a mighty agency it could become in the Christian world. He trained and drilled it with the utmost diligence, and left it the cavalry of Protestant Christendom, not only in a moral but in a literal sense, for by no other body of Christians has the horse been put into such general requisition for the spread of the Gospel as by the Methodist traveling ministry.

They were kept in continual locomotion, passing from town to town almost daily; they preached twice, often thrice, not unfrequently four times a day. Their Circuits were long, including thirty or more different appointments for each month. They were changed from one Circuit to another, usually every year, and invariably every two years, often from England to Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and back again. There were twenty of these "rounds" in England, two in Wales, two in Scotland, and seven in Ireland, as early as 1749; and at Wesley's death they had multiplied to seventy-

[5] Myles's Chron. Hist., chap. 1.

two in England, three in Wales, seven in Scotland, and twenty-eight in Ireland. As they increased or extended the preacher's liabilities of labor or transference increased also. Itineracy, in Wesley's estimation, not only had a salutary moral effect on the evangelists by keeping them energetic and chivalrous, it had the capital advantage of enabling one preacher to minister the truth to many places, and it made small abilities available on a large scale. Wesley says that he believed he should preach himself and his congregation "asleep" were he to stay in one place an entire year.[6] Nor could he believe that it "was ever the will of the Lord that any congregation should have one teacher only." "We have found," he writes, "by long and constant experience, that a frequent change of teachers is best. This preacher has one talent, that another. No one whom I ever yet knew has all the talents which are needful for beginning, continuing, and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation." "Neither," he adds, "can he find matter for preaching every morning and evening; nor will the people come to hear him. Hence he grows cold, and so do the people; whereas, if he never stays more than a fortnight together in one place, he may find matter enough, and the people will gladly hear him."

The itinerants were taught to manage difficulties in the societies, to face mobs, to brave any weather, to subsist without means, except such as might casually occur on their routes, to rise at four and preach at five o'clock, to scatter books and tracts, to live by rule, and to die without fear. The power of Wesley over them could be maintained by no man who did not, like himself, exemplify whatever he taught them, for he was the living model of whatever he endeavored to make them. He prescribed the minutest rules of life for them, even such as concerned their physical habits. He found that some became "nervous," more probably by too much work than by too little, though he thought

[6] Not "preach himself out," however, as he has sometimes been wrongly quoted.

otherwise. He gave them advice on the subject: "Touch no drink, tobacco, or snuff. Eat very light, if any, supper. Breakfast on nettle, or orange-peel tea. Lie down before ten; rise before five. Every day use as much exercise as you can bear: or murder yourself by inches." "These rules," he adds, "are as necessary for the people as the preachers." He allowed his itinerants, however, to drink a glass of ale at night after preaching. He interrogated them closely, in his printed Minutes, about their habits. "Do you," he asked, "deny yourselves every useless pleasure of sense, imagination, honor? Are you temperate in all things? To take one instance, in food—Do you use only that *kind*, and that *degree*, which is best both for the body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this? Do you eat no flesh suppers? no late suppers? These naturally tend to destroy bodily health. Do you eat only three meals a day? If four, are you not an excellent pattern to the flock? Do you take no more food than is necessary at each meal? You may know, if you do, by a load at your stomach; by drowsiness or heaviness; and, in a while, by weak or bad nerves. Do you use only that *kind* and that *degree* of drink which is best both for your body and soul? Do you drink water? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off, if not for health? When will you begin again? to-day? How often do you drink wine or ale? Every day? Do you *want* or *waste* it?"

His rules for a "helper" are stringent enough:

1. He was to be diligent; never unemployed a moment, never triflingly employed; never to while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than was strictly necessary.

2. To be serious; his motto to be, Holiness to the Lord; to avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

3. To converse sparingly and cautiously with women, particularly with young women in private.

4. To take no step toward marriage without first acquainting Wesley with his design.

5. To believe evil of no one; to put the best construction

on everything; to remember that the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

6. To speak evil of no one; to keep his thoughts within his own breast till he came to the person concerned.

7. To tell every one what he thought wrong in him, and that plainly, and as soon as might be, lest it fester in his heart.

8. Not to affect the gentleman; he had no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master, for a preacher of the Gospel is the servant of all. But though he was not to affect the gentleman he was to be one in all good respects, as Wesley taught in his Address to the Clergy.

9. To be ashamed of nothing but sin; not of fetching wood (if time permit) or of drawing water; not of cleaning his own shoes, or his neighbor's.

10. To be punctual; to do everything exactly at the time: and, in general, not *mend* the Methodist rules, but *keep* them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.

11. He was to have nothing to do but to save souls, and therefore to spend and be spent in this work. And to go always, not only to those who wanted him, but to those who wanted him most.

12. To act in all things, not according to his own will, but as a son in the Gospel. As such, it was his duty to employ his time in the manner in which he should be directed; partly in preaching, and visiting the flock from house to house; partly in reading, meditation, and prayer. "Above all," wrote Wesley, "if you labor with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do *that part* of the work which we advise, at *those* times and places which we judge most for his glory." He advised his itinerants not to continue public services beyond one hour, and seldom to pray longer than eight or ten minutes at a time; not to allegorize their subjects; to stick to their texts and never to select such as are obscure. He denounced clamorous preaching. To one of his American preachers he wrote: "Scream no more, at the peril of your soul. God now warns you by me, whom

he has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord, 'He shall not *cry*:' the word properly means, He shall not *scream*. Herein be a follower of me, as I am of Christ. I often speak loud, often vehemently; but I never scream; I never strain myself; I dare not; I know it would be a sin against God and my own soul. Perhaps one reason why that good man, Thomas Walsh, yea, and John Manners too, were in such grievous darkness before they died, was, because they shortened their own lives."[7]

Thomas Walsh was the first of the lay evangelists who dared to preach from the pulpit in London; they had always stood in the reading desk. Walsh was a man of deep humility, but he believed himself a genuine ambassador of Christ, and respected his office. When he first arrived he walked up directly into the pulpit, disregarding the custom. The solemnity of his manner and the commanding force of his eloquence awed the congregation. None questioned his course, and from that time the lay preachers ascended the London pulpits, no man forbidding them.

We have seen how persistently Wesley enjoined upon them habits of study. To one who neglected this duty he wrote: "Hence your talent in preaching does not increase; it is just the same as it was seven years ago. It is lively, but not deep; there is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with daily meditation and daily prayer. You wrong yourself greatly by omitting this; you can never be a deep preacher without it, any more than a thorough Christian. O begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not; what is tedious at first, will afterward be pleasant. Whether you like it or not, read and pray daily. It is for your life! there is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a pretty, superficial preacher.

[7] Letter 308, Works vol. vii. The American preachers could generally outscream their English fellow-laborers.

Do justice to your own soul: give it time and means to grow: do not starve yourself any longer." He required them to study five hours daily.

Most of them became studious, and he says of them generally: "In the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination in substantial, practical, experimental divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the University, (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love,) are able to do."

Their support was generally meager, and when enfeebled by disease or years they often suffered severely. If able to preach "only two or three times a week" they were recorded as "supernumerary;" when broken down by the infirmities of age they were reported as "superannuated," and in both of these classes the evils of poverty were usually added to their other sufferings, during the first half century of Methodism. Beyond the casual assistance of the societies, the Preachers' Fund was their chief reliance in such cases; and each member of the Conference paid one guinea on his admission, and afterward half a guinea yearly for this purpose. If he became too infirm for "regular work" he was paid an annuity of not less than ten pounds from the fund; at his death his widow received from it a sum of not more than forty pounds, if she needed it. In the early periods of the ministry "he who had a staff," says Christopher Hopper, "might take one; he who had none might go without or stay at home." For some years no stated provision whatever was made for the preacher. At a later period the circuits were directed to pay, if they could, three pounds quarterly for his clothes and books. Mather was the first who received any allowance for a wife; it amounted to four shillings a week. An additional allowance of twenty shillings a quarter was made for each child. When the preacher was at his own home, eighteen pence a day was allowed for his board; abroad he lived among the people. In 1770 it was ordered that each preacher should

have £12 annually for his wife; £4 for each boy under eight, and each girl under fourteen years of age. The growth of their families, or the prostration of their health by labor and privation, compelled many of them to "locate," or "desist from traveling." Of two hundred and eighteen, classed, by a historian of Methodism, as the "first race of Methodist Preachers," more than half (one hundred and thirteen) retired from the itineracy,[8] nearly all for such reasons. The early itinerants in America suffered in like manner. Of six hundred and fifty who had been recorded in the Minutes in the United States, by the end of the last century, about five hundred died "located," and many of the remainder were a longer or a shorter interval in the local ranks, but were able to resume their travels. The early American Conference records show a host of martyrs; nearly half of those whose deaths are recorded fell before they were thirty years old; about two thirds died after twelve years' service. A majority of the "first race of Methodist preachers" in England, who died in the itineracy fell prematurely, victims of their hard work.[9]

In America they suffered not only from excessive labors, but by the exposures incident to a new country, and the severities of a variable climate, sinking under the heats of the south or the wintry storms of the north, swimming streams, braving snows, sleeping but partially sheltered in frontier cabins or under the trees of the forest. The English preachers had few such trials; but we have seen them suffering from destitution, traveling thousands of miles on foot for want of horses, and wading through the snows of the north from appointment to appointment. A Methodist writer, speaking of the original Macclesfield circuit, which included Macclesfield, Congleton, Burslem, Leek, Norwich, Buxton, and other places, and reached eastward into the Peak of Derby, says that he has heard some of the old stalwart woodland shepherds speak of carrying the first preach-

[8] See "Chronological List" in Myles's History, p. 294.
[9] Memorials of Methodism, (Second Series,) chap. 1. Boston, 1852.

ers on their backs through the snowdrifts, which choked the roads in winter. Sometimes a preacher was seen with a spade strapped on the saddle behind him, when taking his departure from Macclesfield for the bleak portion of the circuit; the spade being necessary to cut a way for man and horse through the drifts of snow.

Amid the many odd and not a few weak things with which their simple autobiographies abound in the old Arminian Magazines—the much to smile at, and the many things to excuse or deplore as enthusiastic or superstitious —we can but wonder, and arrest ourselves often, with tears, over the artless and unpretentious tales of their trials and triumphs, and their unconscious exhibitions of chivalric and heroic character. One of them, who died at his post, writes with characteristic simplicity: "I have been in most of the circuits in the kingdom, and I trust God has been pleased to use me, and those with me, during these twenty years, to unite thousands to the societies; but it is better to leave this to God and his people. They are our epistles, written by Christ to the rejoicing of our hearts. May their conversion be known and read by all that know them! I have been in dangers by snow-drifts, by land-floods, by falls from my horse, and by persecution; I have been in sickness, cold, pain, weakness, and weariness often; in joyful comforts often; in daily love and peace, but not enough; in grief and heaviness through manifold temptations often. I have had abundance of trials with my heart, with my understanding and judgment, with various reasonings among friends and foes, with men and devils, and most with myself; but through all these, God in mercy has hitherto kept me. I have from my beginning thought myself the poor man's preacher, having nothing of politeness in my language, address, or anything else. I am but a brown-bread preacher, seeking to help all I can to heaven in the best manner I can. O that in the day of Christ's judgment I may rejoice, not only in the sincerity of my labor, but in knowing that I have not preached, and labored, and suffered without fruit,

but have been the instrument of gaining souls to, and of keeping them with, Christ." [9]

Their continual travels exposed them, sometimes, to the highway robbers that infested England in the last century; but they had little fear of them, as they had little or nothing to lose. The foot-pads not only deemed them rather poor prey, but had reason to dread them for their superabundant wealth of religious zeal and exhortation. A poor evangelist, while traveling his circuit, was met by three robbers. One of the band seized his horse by the bridle, a second pointed a pistol at his breast, and a third caught hold of him to pull him from his saddle, all swearing they would instantly have his money or his life. He looked them steadfastly in the face, asking them if they had prayed that morning? They seemed confounded. But one of them snatched the itinerant's watch out of his pocket; another took off his saddle-bags, and pulled out a knife to rip them open. He cried, "Stop, friend! there is nothing there but a few religious books, and you are very welcome to have them to read if you please; as to money, I have only twopence-halfpenny," which he took out of his pocket immediately, and gave to them. "Now," he added, "shall I give you my coat? You are welcome to anything I have about me; only I would have you to remember I am a servant of God, and am now going on his errand. I am going to preach. I beg you will let me pray with you before we part, and it may do you more good than anything I have given to you." At this one of them said to the others, "We will keep nothing belonging to this man; if we do, vengeance will pursue us." He took the money and returned it with his own hands into the preacher's pocket, and insisted that the second who had taken the watch should return it; and after a little hesitation it was replaced also; the third, taking up the bags laid them on the horse, and fastened them to the saddle. He thanked them all for "their great civility;" and again renewing his request that they

[9] Thomas Hanson, Arminian Mag., 1780.

would let him pray with them, he fell upon his knees on the road, "and prayed," says the narrator, "with great power.'" Two of the robbers, alarmed at this unexpected treatment, skulked away; but the third knelt upon the earth, deeply affected, "so that there was reason to hope he was resolved to become a new man."[10]

Wesley sympathized with the poverty of his itinerants, and relieved them in every practicable way; but he could usually give them only brave and comforting words. As late as 1788 he wrote to Jonathan Crowther: "The sum of the matter is, 'you want money,' and money you shall have if I can beg, borrow, or—anything but steal. I say, therefore, 'Dwell in the land and be doing good, and verily thou shalt be fed.' Our preachers now find in the north of Scotland what we formerly found all over England. Yet they went on! And when I had only blackberries to eat in Cornwall, still God gave me strength sufficient for my work."[11]

Notwithstanding their many hardships, they were notable as a cheerful, if not indeed a humorous class of men. Their hopeful theology, their continual success, their conscious self-sacrifice for the good of others, the great variety of characters they met in their travels, and their habit of self-accommodation to all, gave them an ease, a *bonhommie*, which often took the form of jocose humor; and the occasional morbid minds among them could hardly resist the infectious example of their happier brethren. Wesley himself mentions their cheerfulness as one reason why they were disliked by a class of Churchmen and other Christians. "Grave and solemn men," he says, "though too few are guilty of this fault, dislike many of the Methodist preachers for having nothing of that gravity and solemnity about them."[12] Cheerful as he was himself, perhaps as much from the same causes as from his natural temperament, he found

[10] James Rogers, Lives of Early Preachers, vol. ii, p. 407.

[11] Letter 887, Works, vol. vii. We have heard before of these Cornwall adventures from honest John Nelson, vol. i, p. 193.

[12] Answer to an Important Question, Works, vol. vii, p. 317.

it necessary continually to enjoin upon them to "be serious," to "never be triflingly employed." While they were as earnest as men about to meet death, and full of the tenderness which could "weep with those who wept," no men could better "rejoice with those who rejoiced." They were usually the best story-tellers on their long circuits, and of course had abundance of their own adventures to relate at the hearths and tables of their hosts. Not a few of them became noted, throughout the United Kingdom, as wits, in the best sense of the term, and were by their repartees, as well as their courage and religious earnestness, a terror to evil-doers. The American Methodist preachers were the greatest wits of the last century in the New World; the fact is historical, whether it be esteemed creditable or not; and rightly considered, it is far from discreditable. If few men could better relish innocent humor, none were more devout, none greater laborers or greater sufferers.

The usefulness of these hard-working men is attested in almost every part of the earth whither the English language has extended. A writer, who has not been disposed to flatter them, admits "that it would not be easy, or not possible, to name any company of Christian preachers, from the apostolic age downward to our times, whose proclamation of the Gospel has been in a larger proportion of instances effective, or which has been carried over so large a surface with so much power, or with so uniform a result. No such harvest of souls is recorded to have been gathered by any body of contemporary men since the first century. An attempt to compute the converts to Methodistic Christianity would be a fruitless as well as presumptuous undertaking, from which we draw back; but we must not call in question, what is so variously and fully attested, that an unimpeachable Christian profession was the fruit of the Methodistic preaching in instances that must be computed by hundreds of thousands, throughout Great Britain and in America."[13] He might have said millions. There are about two and a

[13] Isaac Taylor, Wesley and Methodism.

half millions of communicants bearing the name of Methodists in our day; millions have gone to their eternal rest, and many thousands of Methodist converts have entered other communions. Methodism has largely recruited its sister denominations for a hundred years.

The Local Preachers have always constituted a mighty arm of the Methodist service. They were men who usually pursued their secular employments, and preached at night and on Sundays in their own neighborhoods; but many traveled extensively. They became much more numerous than the itinerant force, and combined and labored in all the regions round about, according to a plan prepared by the Assistant or preacher in charge of the circuit.[14] Silas Told and Matthew Mayer have appeared as examples in these pages, and eminent instances will occur in them hereafter. Throughout the range of Methodism, the local preachers are still a powerful body of ministerial laborers; three of them founded Methodism in the New World, and their successors have founded it in many of the new States of the West. They usually begin as licensed exhorters, graduate to the local ministry, and thence into the itineracy. The latter has always been recruited from the former. No feature in the ministerial economy of Methodism shows more wisdom, or has been more important, than this threefold arrangement and graduation of its public teachers. The license of exhorters and local preachers was renewed annually; if it was found inexpedient to continue any one in office, he was readily set aside by the expiration of his license. Wesley provided but few regulations for them, as all they needed could be found in the "Rules for a Helper."

The history and constitution of the Conference, as the ministerial and supreme body of the Connection, have already been so largely sketched that nothing need here be added respecting it, especially as its powers were

[14] The earliest printed plan dates in 1777. Smith's Hist. of Meth., vol. i. p. 675.

modified, and definitively settled, in the decade following the death of Wesley, and will hereafter come under consideration, as also those of the Quarterly Conference, denominated in England the Quarterly Meeting.

Some important adjunct means of usefulness were added by Wesley to this singular system. Besides his Stewards and organized "visitors of the sick," he established a Dispensary in London. The Finsbury Dispensary is the oldest known institution of the kind, but it was founded twenty years later than Wesley's; and as it was located in the neighborhood where Wesley began this useful charity, it has been conjectured that it arose from his example.[14] He has recorded the origin of his plan.[15] He found among the poor, aided by his Stewards, many suffering from infirmities, which, if uncured, must inevitably keep them poor. They were unable to pay the demands of physicians. "At length," he says, "I thought of a kind of desperate expedient. I will prepare and give them physic myself." For six or seven-and-twenty years he had made anatomy and physic the diversion of his "leisure hours," and had studied them a few months when he was going to America, where he imagined he might be of some service to those who had no regular physician among the colonists. He applied to the study again. He engaged for his assistants an apothecary and an experienced surgeon, resolving, at the same time, to leave all difficult and complicated cases to such physicians as the patients should choose. He gave notice of his scheme, announcing that all who were ill of chronic diseases (for he did not care to venture upon acute) might, if they pleased, come to him at a given time and he would administer to them the best advice he could, and the best medicines he had. In five months medicines were occasionally given to above five hundred persons, many of whom he never saw before, for he did not regard whether they were of his society or not. In that time seventy-one of these, regularly taking their

[14] Smith's Hist. of Meth., vol. i, book iii, chap. 5.
[15] Plain Account of the Methodists, Works, vol. v.

remedies, and following the regimen prescribed, were entirely cured of distempers long thought to be incurable. The whole expense of medicines during this period was nearly forty pounds. "We have," says Wesley, "continued this ever since, and, by the blessing of God, with more and more success."

The Dispensary was long known as an appendage to the Foundry. He also established a home for the poor, chiefly for sick widows, leasing two small houses near the Foundry for the purpose. It accommodated some fifteen persons, to whom he says he might add four or five preachers; "for I myself, as well as the other preachers who are in town, diet with the poor, on the same food and at the same table; and we rejoice herein, as a comfortable earnest of our eating bread together in our Father's kingdom."

He organized also a system of relief or assistance to the industrious poor. They frequently, he says, wanted, in order to carry on their business, a present supply of money. They scrupled to make use of a pawnbroker, but where to borrow it they knew not. He went, in a few days, from one end of the town to the other, and exhorted those who had this world's goods to assist their needy brethren. Fifty pounds were contributed. This was immediately lodged in the hands of two stewards, who attended every Tuesday morning, in order to lend to those who wanted any small sum, usually not exceeding twenty shillings, to be repaid within three months. It is almost incredible, he writes, but it manifestly appeared from their accounts, that with this inconsiderable sum two hundred and fifty were assisted within the space of one year. No amount above five pounds was allowed at one time.

In his Journal for March, 1790, he writes: "Sunday, 14th, was a comfortable day. In the morning I met the Strangers' Society, instituted wholly for the relief not of our society, but for poor, sick, friendless strangers. I do not know that I ever heard or read of such an institution till within a few years. So this also is one of the fruits of

Methodism." Dr. Adam Clarke says that the Strangers' Friend Society was founded by Wesley and himself, in Bristol, in the year 1789. It is still one of the most effective charities of England. When one of Wesley's critics charged Methodism with neglect of the temporal welfare of the poor and sick, his defender could reply: It so happens that societies for the afflicted have been instituted. "In every principal town we have a society for the visiting and relieving the poor, the friendless, and sick who are not members of our society; and great are the sums thus spent, as well as the number of visitors, male and female, who *seek out* the victims of poverty and disease, of every profession of religion, regarding only their necessities, in cellars, garrets, and other abodes of disease, contagion, and wretchedness, to minister to their wants. The good thus effected by their efforts has also been duly appreciated by public opinion, as the large public collections for the Stranger's Friend Society, and other societies, made in our chapels, sufficiently testify; as well as the liberal subscriptions and donations constantly received and especially in London, from persons of all ranks, entirely unconnected with us, but who know the persevering zeal of the visitors, and that systematic management of these societies which, while it effectually guards against imposition, reaches, by patient investigation, the cases of retiring and modest distress."[16]

[16] Watson's Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley.

CHAPTER V.

EDUCATION, MISSIONS, LITERATURE, PSALMODY, AND POPULAR INFLUENCE OF METHODISM.

Moral Condition of England at the Advent of Methodism — Influence of the Methodist Doctrines — Wesley's Educational Labors—Kingswood School — Lady Maxwell — The Orphan House at Newcastle — The School at the Foundry— Theological Schools — Success of Methodism in Education — Connection of Methodism with the Origin and Success of Sunday Schools — Wesley and Fletcher's Interest for them — Missions — The First Tract Society was founded by Wesley — Sketch of its Plan — Methodist Psalmody — Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts — Methodist Singing — Handel composes Music for Methodist Hymns — Wesley's Writings — His Sermons — "Notes" — Journals — Miscellaneous Works — The Christian Library — The Arminian Magazine — Wesley the Founder of Cheap Literature — Intellectual Revolution of England in the Eighteenth Century — Wesley's Agency in it — Conclusion.

In tracing the life and times of Wesley, we have unquestionably been recounting one of the most important, as well as most singular revolutions in the religious history of modern times. But so manifold and energetic was the agency of Methodism in not only the religious, but the moral and social changes through which the English race, in both hemispheres, passed in the last century; so just the remark of a philosophic author, that the Methodistic movement was the "starting point of our modern religious history," back to which we must look, necessarily, as often as we seek to trace "what is most characteristic of the present time,"[1] that a Methodist writer must feel no slight conflict between his sense of modesty and his fidelity to history in recording its claims in this respect. It has already been seen that the Bible Society, the Missionary

[1] Isaac Taylor, Wesleyan Methodism, Preface.

Society in its modern Protestant form, those great publishing institutions misnamed Tract Societies, the adoption of the Sunday School by the church, the religious periodical publication, and most other characteristic religious agencies of our day, sprang directly or indirectly from it.[2] The Methodist historian is relieved in the delicate but necessary task of recording these claims, by the historical obviousness of their grounds, and the candor with which writers beyond his denominational pale have conceded them. A Churchman has said, in language which Methodists themselves might willingly qualify, that "there were no Bible, Tract, or Missionary Societies then to employ the church's powers and indicate its path of duty. But Wesley started them all; he wrote, and printed, and circulated books in thousands upon thousands of copies; he set afloat home and foreign missions. The church and the world were alike asleep; he sounded the trumpet of the Gospel, and awoke the church to work. Never was such a scene before in this land. The correctness and maturity of his views, amid the deep darkness surrounding him, are startling, wonderful; like the idea of a catholic church springing up amid a sectarian Judaism. It is midday without the antecedent dawn; it defies explanation."[3]

The moral degeneracy of England at the epoch of Methodism has already been shown by citations which seem almost incredible in our day, but which are given, not from Methodist authorities, but from representative men of both the Church and the Nonconformity of that period.[4] An English historian of high authority has drawn a picture of the preceding age which has surprised the world, notwithstanding the well-known facts of its demoralization.[5] A later authority has described the times in which Wesley

[2] See pp. 16, 17, and 108–113 of this volume.

[3] Rev. O. T. Dobbin, LL. D., Dublin University, in Kitto's Journal of Sacred Literature, London, 1849. This eloquent article has since been published in London, with the title of "Wesley the Worthy."

[4] See vol. i, book i, chap. 1.

[5] Macaulay's History of England.

appeared as scarcely less corrupt. He shows that the depravity of England, from the accession of the house of Hanover to the first decade of George III., was hardly exceeded in the decline of the Roman Empire, or in that of the old French monarchy.[6] Its popular classes were even more corrupt than during the undisguised profligacy of the Restoration. The flagrant immorality of the latter prevailed chiefly in the circles of the court and the capital, while the severe morality and piety of the Commonwealth still pervaded the homes of the people to a great extent. But if the morals of high life improved somewhat under the Georges, the morals of the masses continued to decline; the reaction of the Restoration took a longer time to reach them, but continued to affect them longer; and they were at their lowest ebb when Methodism appeared. Puritanism was known no longer by its severe morality. It existed chiefly in dwindled or deadened Churches. To Englishmen of the present day the state of the popular morals and of the police, in Wesley's age, is scarcely conceivable. The history of Methodism, thus far given in these pages, is an almost continuous proof of this remark. Though the great leaders of the movement commanded at last enough public respect to protect them from violence, yet, during more than half a century, we have seen their subordinate fellow-laborers contending with mobs which were led, not in a few, but in many instances, by magistrates, and by clergymen in their sacerdotal robes. The examples have been so frequent that they have pallcd upon the attention of the reader; with the modern abundance of newspapers and the present avidity for the particularities of public news, the people of England in the last century would have had them to read almost constantly for sixty years. A magistrate, and especially a clergyman, heading such riots in our day would excite the indignation of a na-

[6] History of England during the reign of George III., by William Massey, M. P., *passim*. Massey corroborates Thackeray's pictures of English manners given in his sketches of the four Georges, and in his Virginians.

tion; in that day such facts seldom or never received notice from the public press. Deplorable as are still many aspects of popular English life, occasioned by the transition through which civilization is passing especially in manufactures and commerce, candid historians are compelled to acknowledge that a change nothing short of a revolution began with the commencement of Methodism, and has continued to advance with it. To attribute this improvement chiefly to Methodism might seem presumptuous. That the one has been coincident with the other is nevertheless an historical fact. The equal revolution which has, meanwhile, taken place in the Churches of the realm, is generally acknowledged as the effect of the Methodistic movement; and if it be a fact that the moral condition of a country is dependent upon the condition of its Churches, or at least cannot advance against the general declension of religion, the connection of Methodism with the moral progress of England is an obvious national fact, and deserves to be recognized as an historical fact.

The means by which it exerted this influence have already been largely shown, but some of them remain yet to be considered.

The great common doctrines of Whitefield and Wesley were doubtless inestimable elements of their power; but not these alone, for "the very same things," says one of their critics, "had been affirmed from year to year, by able and sincere preachers, in the hearing of congregations assenting to all they heard—not indeed without, yet with no such effect as ordinarily, if not invariably, attended the Methodist preaching."[7] He asserts it to be an unquestionable truth, apart from which the history of Methodism is wholly inexplicable, that a divine energy was granted to the Methodist proclamation of the Gospel in a "sovereign" manner and in an unwonted degree. But the Divine sovereignty works by means; and by the appreciable peculiarities or means of Methodism are we to estimate the con

[7] Isaac Taylor, Wesleyan Methodism, page 138. Am. ed.

ditions of its success. Its lay ministry, its itineracy, its societies, classes, bands, love-feasts, watch-nights, its discipline and its charitable labors for the poor, already enumerated, were obviously among the chief instruments of its power. But it was not content with these.

Methodism was cradled in a University, though it was born in the Epworth Rectory. It could not, therefore, be indifferent, much less hostile, to the education of the people, though its poverty, and its absorption in more directly moral labors for their elevation, did not at first allow much scope to its educational measures. Wesley, however, never lost sight of such measures; and it is an interesting fact, that in the year which is recognized as the epoch of Methodism, the date of its first field preaching, and among the miserable people where the latter began, it also began the first of its literary institutions. And if anything could enhance the interest of this fact, it is that the founders of both Methodistic parties, Calvinistic and Arminian, shared in the founding of the first Methodist seminary. Whitefield laid the corner-stone of the Kingswood School; and kneeling upon the ground, surrounded by reclaimed and weeping colliers, prayed that "the gates of hell" might not prevail against it; while the prostrate multitude, now awakened to a new intellectual as well as moral life, responded with hearty Amens. Wesley reared it by funds which he reserved from the income of his college fellowship or received from his followers. It was the germ of the later institution which bears its name.

Among the eminent women of early Methodism was Darcy, Lady Maxwell, whose memoirs continue to be one of its most instructive biographies.[8] She encouraged its preachers in Scotland, when, after the Calvinistic controversy, they were generally discountenanced by even the

[8] Life of Darcy, Lady Maxwell. Southey says: "This book shows more of high enthusiastic devotion, unmingled and undebased, than is to be found in any other composition of the kind." Life of Wesley, chap. 19

devout portions of the Kirk. Bereaved of her husband by death, in her nineteenth year, and of her only child four weeks later, she was never known afterward to mention the name of either, but turned with a broken heart from the world to seek consolation in a holy life, and the hope of that day when "the dead shall come forth." She found in Methodism a standard of piety which met the demands of her awakened conscience, and afforded the comfort which her afflictions needed. She has recorded, that had it not been for the Methodists she probably should never have known the consolations in religion which she had attained, for no other teachers around her had fully taught them, and it is seldom, she remarks, that we go beyond our teachers. She lived and died an intelligent, modest, but decided witness for the Methodist teachings respecting Christian perfection. She survived till 1810, and died the oldest member of the society to which she belonged. It was by the aid of this noble woman that Wesley was able to erect his noted Kingswood School. When he first mentioned the design to her, she put into his hands five hundred pounds toward it; and on learning, some time afterward, that it was indebted three hundred pounds, she forthwith gave him the entire amount, and her donations were conferred with a delicacy which gave a grace to her liberality.

The discipline of the school was unreasonably severe,[9] but it quickly had twenty-eight pupils. Its system of instruction was remarkably thorough, and its comparatively few students were placed under a faculty of no less than six teachers. It was one of the heaviest burdens of Wesley's life. He frequently alludes to its vexatious embarrassments. About three years after his death it was exclusively appropriated to the sons of preachers. Its accommodations were subsequently found to be insufficient for the growing numbers of such pupils, and the estate of 'Woodhouse Grove," not far from Leeds, was purchased

[9] Adam Clarke gives some curious examples of its severity. Life, by his Son, book iii, p. 136.

for a second institution of the same character.[10] Both have been important parts of the provision for the families of the Wesleyan ministry. In our day from two hundred to two hundred and fifty sons of preachers and missionaries are educated within them, and gratuitously boarded and clothed during a term of six years. The Connection has expended between £300,000 and £400,000 upon these seminaries.

Wesley also early projected schools for poor children at Newcastle and London. His preaching-house at the former place was called the Orphan House, and its deed provided that it should maintain a school of forty poor children, with a master and mistress. Its site is now occupied by a substantial edifice for a Mixed and Infants' Wesleyan Day School, and also a Girls' Industrial School. More than four hundred children are daily receiving instruction within its walls.[11]

Of his school at the London Foundry he has himself given us an account: "Another thing which had given me great concern was, the case of abundance of children. Some their parents could not afford to put to school, so they remained like 'a wild ass's colt.' Others were sent to school, and learned, at least, to read and write; but they learned all kinds of vice at the same time; so that it had been better for them to have been without their knowledge, than to have bought it at so dear a price. At length I determined to have them taught in my own house, that they might have an opportunity of learning to read, write, and cast accounts, (if no more,) without being under almost a necessity of learning heathenism at the same time; and after several unsuccessful trials, I found two such schoolmasters as I wanted, men of honesty and of sufficient knowledge, who had talents for, and their hearts in the work. They have now under

[10] Still later Kingswood has been transferred to "New Kingswood," near Bath, and the Woodhouse Grove institution has been rebuilt.

[11] Fourth Annual Report of the Wesleyan Chapel Committee, 1858, p. 14. London.

their care nearly sixty children; the parents of some pay for their schooling; but the greater part, being very poor, do not; so that the expense is chiefly defrayed by voluntary contributions. We have of late clothed them too, as many as wanted. A happy change was soon observed in the children, both with regard to their tempers and behavior. They learned reading, writing, and arithmetic swiftly; and at the same time they were diligently instructed in the sound principles of religion, and earnestly exhorted to fear God and work out their own salvation."[12]

We have seen "honest Silas Told" toiling in this humble sphere, from five o'clock in the morning till five in the evening, for seven years, during which he trained three hundred boys, "who were fitted for almost any trade."

It has already been stated that as early as his first Conference, in 1744, Wesley proposed a theological school or "Seminary for Laborers." It could not then be attempted for want of funds. The project was reconsidered at the next session, and failed for the same reason. Kingswood School was made a kind of substitute for it, but the original design was never abandoned, and is embodied to-day in the two effective "Theological Institutions" of Richmond and Didsbury, and the two "Biblical Institutes" of American Methodism.

Such were some of the efforts for education made by the Methodism of Wesley's day. They have since given origin to a system of educational provisions as extensive, if not as effective, as belongs to any other English or American Protestant body, except the Anglican and Scotch Establishments: to the Wesley College in Sheffield, the Collegiate Institution in Taunton, (both of them in a collegiate relation to the University of London;) the Wesleyan Normal Institution at Westminster, whose stately buildings cost £40,000, and accommodate more than one hundred students preparing to be teachers; to a grand scheme of Day Schools which

[12] Plain Account of the Methodists, Works, vol. v.

at present comprises four hundred and fifty schools and more than fifty-five thousand pupils. [13]

The denomination in America, as we shall hereafter see, early took a similar interest in education. Soon after its episcopal organization it began a college; when this was consumed by fire it repeated the experiment, but was again defeated in like manner. It subsequently began that series of universities, colleges, theological schools, and boarding academies, which now comprises not less than a hundred and twenty institutions.

The moral and social influence, in England and America, of such a series of educational provisions, reaching from the first year of Methodism to our own day, must be incalculable; and had it given to the world no other monuments of its usefulness, these would suffice to establish its claims as one of the effective means of the moral progress of the English race in both hemispheres since Wesley began his singular career.

It has perhaps exerted a still more profound as well as more general influence by another educational means.

As early as 1769 a young Methodist, Hannah Ball, established a Sunday school in Wycombe, and was instrumental in training many children in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.[14] Doubtless similar attempts were made before that time, but they were only anticipations of the modern institution of Sunday schools.

In 1781, while another Methodist young woman (afterward the wife of the celebrated lay preacher, Samuel Bradburn) was conversing in Gloucester with Robert Raikes, a benevolent citizen of that town and publisher of the Gloucester Journal, he pointed to groups of neglected children in the street, and asked: "What can we do for them?" She answered: "Let us teach them to read and take them to

[13] Lecture on Wesleyan Institutions, by Henry M. Fowler, page 26. London, 1858. Corrected by Nineteenth Annual Report of the Wesleyan Commissioners of Education, 1858.

[14] Jackson's Preface to Memoir of Hannah Ball, p. 9. London, 1839.

church!" They immediately proceeded to try the suggestion, and the philanthropist and his female friend attended the first company of Sunday scholars to the church, exposed to the comments and laughter of the populace as they passed along the street with their ragged procession.[15] Such was the origin of our present Sunday School, an institution which has perhaps done more for the Church and the social improvement of Protestant communities, than any other agency of modern times, the pulpit excepted. Raikes and his humble assistant conducted the experiment without ostentation. Not till November 3, 1783, did he refer to it in his public journal.[16] In 1784 he published in his paper an account of his plan. This sketch immediately arrested the attention of Wesley, who inserted the entire article in the January number of his Arminian Magazine for 1785, and exhorted his people to adopt the new institution. "They took his advice," says an historian of Methodism, and "laboring, hard-working men and women began to instruct their neighbors' children, and to go with them to the house of God on the Lord's Day."[17] The same year, as we learn from a printed letter of Mary Fletcher, her husband "lately hearing of Sunday schools, thought much upon them, and then set about the work." He soon had three hundred children under instruction, and diligently trained them till his last illness. He drew up proposals for six such schools in Coalbrook Dale, Madeley, and Madeley Wood. He wrote an essay on "the advantages likely to arise from Sunday schools," and designed to prepare small publications for their use, but his death cut off his plans.

Wesley's earliest notice of Sunday schools is in his Journal for July 18, 1784, the year of Raikes's published account of them. He speaks of them prophetically: "I find these schools springing up wherever I go; perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of; who

[15] Memoir of Sophia Bradburn, in Wesleyan Magazine for 1834, p. 319.
[16] Wesleyan Magazine, 1846, p. 561.
[17] Myles's Chronological History, anno 1785.

knows but some of these schools may be nurseries for Christians?" They were introduced into the metropolis by the Calvinistic Methodist, Rowland Hill, in 1786;[18] in the same year they were begun in the United States by the Methodist bishop, Francis Asbury, and this first Sunday school of the New World prefigured one of the most important later advantages of the institution, by giving a useful preacher to the Methodist Episcopal Church.[19] Wesley mentions in 1786, that five hundred and fifty children were taught in the Sunday school of his society at Bolton, and the next year he found there eight hundred, taught by eighty "masters." Richard Rodda, one of his preachers, records that, in 1786, he formed a Sunday school in Chester, and soon had nearly seven hundred children "under regular masters."[20] Wesley wrote to him in the beginning of 1787: "I am glad you have taken in hand that blessed work of setting up Sunday schools in Chester. It seems these will be *one great means of reviving religion throughout the nation.* I wonder Satan has not yet sent out some able champion against them." On the 18th of April, 1788, Wesley preached at Wigan, "a sermon for the Sunday schools," and "the people flocked from all quarters in a manner that never was seen before." The year before his death he wrote to Charles Atmore, an itinerant preacher: "I am glad you have set up Sunday schools at Newcastle. This is one of the best institutions which has been seen in Europe for some centuries."

Thus is Methodism historically connected with both the initiation and outspread of this important institution. Under the impulse of its zeal the Sunday school was soon almost universally established in its societies. A similar interest for it prevailed among other religious bodies; and in three years after Raikes's published account of it, more

[18] Sydney's Life of Hill, chapters 7 and 20; and Jones's Life of Hill, chap. 9. Hill published a sermon in defense of Sunday schools, in reply to an attack made upon the institution by Bishop Horseley.

[19] Strickland's Life of Asbury, chap. 11.

[20] Wesleyan Magazine, 1846, p. 562.

than two hundred thousand children were receiving instruction from its thousands of teachers.[21] The Irish Conference of 1794 voted: "Let Sunday schools be established as far as possible in all the towns of this kingdom where we have societies;[22] and in March, 1798, a "Methodist Sunday School Society" was formed at City Road Chapel, London. In the following December Drs. Coke and Whitehead preached the first sermons before it.[23] In our day Methodism, exclusive of all the minor sects which bear the name, has under its direction an army of nearly 450,000 scholars and 80,000 teachers in England and Scotland;[24] and more than 800,000 scholars and 150,000 teachers in the United States.

The idea of religious Missions is as old as Christianity, and was exemplified by the Papal Church through much of its history and in the ends of the world. The Moravians early embodied it in their system. In the Protestantism of England it had but feeble sway till the epoch of Methodism. That sublime form of it which now characterizes English Protestantism in both hemispheres, and which proposes the evangelization of the whole race, appeared in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Societies for the propagation of the Gospel had previously existed in England, but they were provided chiefly, if not exclusively, for the Christianization of countries which, by reason of their political dependence upon England, were deemed to have special claims on British Christianity—the inhabitants of India and the Indians of North America. An historian of missions, writing in 1844, says: "It was not until almost within the last fifty years that the efforts of the religious bodies by whom Christian

[21] Archdeacon Kay's sermon before the Sunday School Society. London, 1787.

[22] Irish Minutes for 1794, p. 9.

[23] Wesleyan Magazine, 1846, p. 565.

[24] Nineteenth Report of Wesleyan Committee of Education, 1858. It does not report from Ireland or the Missions; in the latter alone there are about 10,000 teachers and 100,000 scholars.

missions are now most vigorously supported, were commenced."[25]

Methodism was essentially a missionary movement, domestic and foreign. It initiated not only the spirit but the practical plans of modern English missions. Coke, as we have seen, so represented the enterprise in his own person for many years, as to supersede the necessity of any more formal organization of it, but it was none the less real and energetic. The historian just cited says: "The Wesleyan Missionary Society was formed in 1817, but the first Wesleyan missionaries who went out, under the superintendence of the Rev. Dr. Coke, entered the British colonies in 1786. The Baptist Missionary Society was established in 1792; the London Missionary Society in 1795; and the Edinburgh or Scottish, and the Glasgow Missionary Societies in 1796. The subject also engaged the attention of many pious persons belonging to the Established Church, besides those connected with the London Missionary Society, and by members of that communion the Church Missionary Society was organized in the first year of the present century."[26] It has already been shown that the London Missionary Society, embracing most Dissenting bodies of England, arose under the influence of Calvinistic Methodism, and that the Church Missionary Society sprang from the evangelical or Low Church party, which Methodism, Calvinistic and Arminian, had originated in the Establishment, Venn, the son of the Methodist Venn, being its projector.

Though Coke represented the Arminian Methodist Mission interest, as its founder, secretary, treasurer, and collector, it really took a distinct form some six years before the formation of the first of the above named societies. Coke spent more than a year in representing the Negro missions immediately after his second visit to the West Indies. In 1786 a formal address was issued to the public in behalf of a comprehensive scheme of Methodist

[25] Ellis's History of the London Missionary Society, vol. i, p. 3.
[26] Ibid. See also Coke's Journals, p. 49.

missions. It was entitled "An address to the Pious and Benevolent, proposing an Annual Subscription for the Support of Missionaries in the Highlands and adjacent Islands of Scotland, the Isles of Jersey, Guernsey, and Newfoundland, the West Indies, and the Provinces of Nova Scotia and Quebec. By Thomas Coke, LL.D. 1786."[27] It speaks of "a mission intended to be established in the British dominions in Asia," but which was postponed till these more inviting fields should be occupied. This scheme was called in the address an "Institution;" it was really such; though not called a society, it was one in all essential respects; and if the fact that it was not an extra-ecclesiastical plan, but a part of the ecclesiastical system of Methodism, should detract from its claim of precedence in respect to later institutions of the kind, that consideration would equally detract from the Moravian missions, which were conducted in like manner.

The document proceeds to state, that "a particular account of the missions, with any letters, or extracts of letters, from the missionaries or others, that are worthy of publication, shall be printed as soon as possible after every one of our annual Conferences, and a copy presented to every subscriber; in which, also, the receipts and disbursements of the preceding year, with an alphabetical list of the names of the subscribers, (except where it is otherwise desired,) shall be laid before the public. The Assistants of our Circuits, respectively, will be so kind as to bring the money subscribed to the ensuing Conference, and so from year to year."

The Address filled several pages, and was prefaced by a letter from Wesley endorsing the whole plan.

The next year (1787) the Wesleyan Missions bore the distinctive title of "Missions established by the Methodist Society."[28] At the last Conference attended by Wesley (1790) a Committee of nine preachers, of which Coke was chairman, was appointed to take charge of this new interest.

[27] See Wesleyan Magazine, 1840, p. 578.
[28] Wesleyan Magazine, 1844, p. 222.

Coke continued to conduct its chief business; but the committee were his standing council, and formed, in fact, a Mission Board of Managers two years prior to the organization of the first of modern British missionary societies. Collections had been taken in many of the circuits for the institution, and in 1793 the Conference formally ordered a general collection for it.[29] Coke published accounts of its "receipts and disbursements." The amount for 1787 was £1,167. The names of eminent Churchmen, Dissenters, and Calvinistic as well as Arminian Methodists, are reported on its list of subscribers. Among them are those of Whitbread, Wilberforce, the Thorntons, the Earl of Dartmouth, Earl of Belvidere, Lord Elliott, Lady Mary Fitzgerald, Lady Maxwell, Sir Charles Middleton, (afterward Lord Barham,) Sir Richard Hill, Sir John Carter, Sir William Forbes, Lady Smythe, Hon. Mrs. Carteret, and the Hon. Mrs. Bouverie; the Rev. Mr. Dodwell, of Lincolnshire;[30] Melville Horne, of Madeley; Berridge, of Everton; Abdy, of Horsleydown; Dr. Gillies, of Glasgow; Simpson, of Macclesfield; Pentycross, of Wallingford; Easterbrook, of Bristol; Kennedy, of Teston, and others.

In this manner did Methodism early prompt the British Churches, and call forth the energies of the British people, in plans of religious benevolence for the whole world. Its missions in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and the Channel Islands did much for the reformation of the domestic population. Besides its efforts in 1786 in the West Indies, it began its evangelical labors in France as early as 1791, and we shall hereafter have occasion to speak of the beginning of its great schemes in Africa in 1811; in Asia in 1814; in Australasia in 1815; in Polynesia in 1822; until, from the first call of Wesley for American evangelists, in the Conference of 1769, down to our day, we shall see the grand enterprise reaching to the shores of Sweden, to Germany,

[29] Minutes, vol. i, p. 278.

[30] This clergyman (of the Establishment) several years afterward made a contribution of £10,000 to the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

France, and the Upper Alps; to Gibraltar, and Malta; to the banks of the Gambia, to Sierra Leone, and to the Gold Coast; to the Cape of Good Hope; to Ceylon, to India, and to China; to the Colonists and Aboriginal tribes of Australia; to New Zealand, and the Friendly and Feejee Islands; to the islands of the Western, as well as of the Southern Hemisphere; and from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Puget's Sound.[31] In fifty-seven years, from 1803 to 1859, Wesleyan Methodism has contributed no less than £3,469,832, or $17,349,160, for foreign evangelization. In England the "Church Missionary Society" alone exceeds it in annual collections for the foreign field; but the Wesleyan Society enrolls more communicants in its Mission Churches than all other British missionary societies combined. The historian of religion during the last and present centuries would find it difficult to point to a more magnificent monument of Christianity. Methodism, gathering its hosts mostly from the mines and cottages of England, has embodied them in this sublime movement for the redemption of the world. Its poor have kept its treasury full. They have supplied hundreds if not thousands of their sons and daughters as evangelists to the heathen; and while they have thus been enabled to do good in the extremities of the earth, they have reaped still greater good from the reacting influence of their liberality upon themselves. They have received from it the sentiment of self-respect which comes from well-doing. They have been led to habits of frugality, that their poverty might be consecrated by liberality. They have been elevated above the perversion of local or personal sentiments, by sympathies with their whole race. They have been led to a knowledge of the geography of the world, and to habits of reflection upon its religious, social, and political interests, by the habitual reading of missionary intelligence. They have been brought into closer social as well as Christian communion with one another, by their frequent missionary meetings. Thousands of them have acquired

[31] Alder on Wesleyan Missions, p. 4. London, 1842.

habits of public usefulness by the management of their missionary affairs; and sentiments of universal philanthropy and religious heroism have been spread through their ranks to ennoble their own souls while saving the souls of others.

Another important instrument of modern Christianity is the Tract Society. Its title does not adequately express its present character, for tracts, popularly so called, constitute but a comparatively small part of its publications, books and periodicals being its chief issues. It is, in fine, a grand scheme for the consecration of the press to popular evangelization. As early as 1701 the "Society for promoting Christian Knowledge" was established in England. It was confined, by its regulations, to the Established Church. In 1750 was projected the "Society for promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor." The present multiform and powerful institution called the Tract Society, is, however, of later date. The "Religious Tract Society," of London, was organized in 1799, Rowland Hill being chairman of its first committee.[32] This institution, one of the most commanding of its class in our day, is usually considered the first which bore the title and character of a "Tract Society." Its historian has entirely ignored the labors of Wesley, who, half a century before its birth, not only wrote more tracts than any other man of the age, but began their circulation by his preachers throughout the United Kingdom. The names of several excellent women, who sent forth such publications, in his time, are honorably commemorated, while the name which is really the representaive one in this department of Christian usefulness is not even mentioned.[33] An omission so

[32] Sydney's Rowland Hill, chap. 9.

[33] Jones's Jubilee Memorial of the Religious Tract Society. 8vo., pp. 698. London, 1850. The first chapter of this work needs thorough revision. Its utter disregard of the connection of the Wesleyans with tract literature and labors, while it attempts an impartial history of the subject, is one of the most extraordinary violations of historical fidelity and literary honor, not to speak of Christian courtesy, to be found among the curiosities of literature.

unfortunate for the honor, not to say honesty, of our common Christianity, must be regarded by candid men, of whatever party, as the more surprising and reprehensible when it is remembered that John Wesley not only led the way in the writing and circulation of religious tracts, but really formed the first Tract Society of the Protestant world, seventeen years before the origin of the "Religious Tract Society" of London.

Before 1742 he had written and circulated thousands of his "Word to a Smuggler," "Word to a Sabbath Breaker," "Word to a Swearer," and other similar publications. His Journals show that he habitually distributed them himself, as well as by his itinerants. In 1745 he writes: "It pleased God hereby to provoke others to jealousy; insomuch that the lord mayor had ordered a large quantity of papers, dissuading from cursing and swearing, to be printed, and distributed to the train-bands. And this day an 'Earnest Exhortation to Serious Repentance,' was given at every church door in or near London, to every person who came out, and one left at the house of every householder who was absent from church. I doubt not but God gave a blessing therewith." One of his biographers justly remarks that "he was probably the first to use, on any extensive scale, this means of popular reformation."[34]

In 1782 Wesley and Coke instituted the "Society for the Distribution of Religious Tracts among the Poor." Its "plan" was sent out in a printed sheet, which was appended to the November number of the Arminian Magazine for 1784.[35] Its regulations are few and simple, but comprehend essentially the modern plan of similar societies. These regulations provide that, "First: Every member shall pay half a guinea, a guinea, or more, annually. Second: A proportionable quantity of tracts shall be delivered yearly to each subscriber, according to his subscription, and as nearly as possible at prime cost. Third: Every subscriber shall

[34] Watson's Life of Wesley, p. 188.

[35] It was reprinted in the Wesleyan Magazine for 1847, p. 268.

have a right to choose his own tracts, otherwise he will receive a proportionable variety of the whole." A "List of Books already printed" was appended; it includes thirty titles, two thirds of which are single sermons by Wesley himself, or "Words" prepared by him. Then follow "an extract of the original proposals," and two commendatory certificates, the first signed by Wesley, who says: "I cannot but earnestly recommend this to all those who desire to see true Scriptural Christianity spread throughout these nations. Men wholly unawakened will not take the pains to read the Bible. They have no relish for it. But a small tract may engage their attention for half an hour; and may, by the blessing of God, prepare them for going forward." This recommendation is dated January 24, 1782. The second is dated nearly two years later, (October 27, 1783,) and is signed by Coke. It says: "Never was an institution established on a purer or more disinterested basis than the present. And surely all who wish well to the propagation of divine knowledge must afford their approbation at least to so benevolent a plan. And that God may incline the hearts of thousands to administer an effectual assistance thereto, is the ardent prayer of Thomas Coke."

A document of such historical interest as the "plan" of what was probably the first of tract societies, so called, is worthy of this particular reproduction. Its significance, in more than one respect, will too readily suggest itself to the reader to need an additional word of comment.

The ecclesiastical system of Methodism was, however, so thorough and energetic as to render almost unnecessary any such extra-ecclesiastical schemes of Christian labor. The whole United Society, in both England and America, was itself a great tract society as well as a missionary society. Long before this special organization, Methodism had even anticipated the modern system of colportage. Its traveling preachers were generally colporteurs, and conducted their labors, in that respect, on a stated plan. As early as the Conference of 1749 the Assistant, or preacher in charge, on

each circuit was required to order supplies of books for himself and the Helpers under his control, and to receive a quarterly account of their sales from each society. The preachers carried them in their saddle-bags through all their "rounds." It was a part of their ministerial work to scatter them broadcast. The Methodist Book Concerns, in our times the largest religious publishing houses on the globe, were founded by the book sales of the Methodist ministry.

Wesley labored incessantly by his pen for the elevation of the popular mind. The German historian of Methodism classifies, with German elaborateness, the great variety of his literary works, as Poetical, Philological, Philosophical, Historical, and Theological.[36] He complains that his countrymen, notwithstanding their characteristic avidity for all foreign literature, had not yet rendered any of these productions into their own language, and promises to translate them himself as among the valuable publications of the age. Though he wrote before Wesley's death, he states that many of them, after ten or twenty editions, could be obtained only with difficulty, and the whole could not be purchased for less than ten guineas, notwithstanding they were published at rates surprisingly cheap; for Wesley was the first to set the example of modern cheap prices sustained by large sales.[37] A catalogue of his publications, printed about 1756, contains no less than one hundred and eighty-one articles in in prose and verse, English and Latin, on grammar, logic, medicine, music, poetry, theology, and philosophy. Two thirds of these publications were for sale at less than one shilling each, and more than one fourth at a penny. They were thus brought within reach of the poorest of his people.[38] "Simplify religion and every part of learning," he wrote to Benson, who was the earliest of his lay preachers addicted to literary labors. To all his preachers he said,

[36] Burkhard, Vollstandige Geschichte, etc., chap. 5.

[37] Lackington, the apostate but reclaimed Methodist, claims this honor, (Life, Letters 35–40,) but Wesley set him the example.

[38] Wesleyan Magazine, 1840, p. 214.

"See that every society is supplied with books," some of which "ought to be in every house."

The lyrical literature of Methodism is pre-eminent both for its character and its extent. It was a necessary condition of the evangelical reformation of the eighteenth century that an improved Psalmody should be provided. Sternhold and Hopkins, though not entirely obnoxious to Wesley's charge against them of "miserable, scandalous doggerel," were unsuited to both the intellectual and moral advancement which the new religious movement was to introduce; and Tate and Brady were so extremely deficient in these respects, that in comparison with them Sternhold and Hopkins have been called David and Asaph.[39] The necessary psalmody was not only provided as a result of the new movement, but was begun even in anticipation of it. The Wesleys published their first hymn book as early as 1738, the year in which they date their regenerated life;[40] and the next year, the epoch of Methodism, was signalized by the appearance of their "Hymns and Sacred Poems," two editions of which appeared before its close. And now rapidly followed, year after year, sometimes twice a year, not only new editions of these volumes, but new poetic works, which were scattered more extensively than any other of their publications through England, Wales, Ireland, the British West Indies, the North American provinces, and the United States, till not less than forty-nine poetical publications were enumerated among their literary works; and before Wesley's death a common psalmody, sung mostly to a common music, resounded through all the Methodist chapels of the English and American world. The achievement accomplished by Methodism in this respect is alone one of the most extraordinary historical facts of the last century. Its influence on the popular taste, intellectual

[39] Coleridge, Note to Southey's Wesley, chap. 21.

[40] "A Collection of Psalms and Hymns. London: Printed in the year 1738." No printer's name is given.

as well as moral, could not fail to be incalculably great. So thorough has been the subsequent revolution in the popular appreciation of sacred poetry, that much of the psalmody sung in the churches of England at the advent of Methodism would not now be tolerated in public assemblies. Its effect, in many instances, would even be ludicrous.

Watts deserves the credit of leading the way in this important reform. The first poetical publication of the Wesleys was largely made up of his hymns, but Charles Wesley soon became his rival in popular estimation. They towered above all their predecessors and contemporaries in this department of literature, and no later writer of hymns can dispute their common superiority. Their example, and the new religious wants of the times, prompted the emulation or genius of many able but inferior writers,[41] most of them directly or indirectly under the Methodistic influence, and the hymns of Doddridge, Toplady, Newton, Cowper, Cennick, Steele, and Beddome rapidly appeared and promoted the lyrical reform. The comparative claims of Watts and Charles Wesley are yet undetermined, but their common pre-eminence is undisputed. The verdict of literary criticism has generally been in favor of Watts; but Charles Wesley has suffered from the undeserved prejudice of the literary world against Methodism, a prejudice now fast giving way. In proportion as it has subsided, has his extraordinary genius come to be recognized; and it has become probable that sooner or later he will be pronounced the equal if not the superior of his great contemporary.[42] Watts himself acknowledged that he would give

[41] This remark does not detract from Cowper's poetical excellence in other respects. Milton, it has been said, composed but one good psalm.

[42] Creamer (Methodist Hymnology, *passim*, New York, 1848) agrees with John Wesley and Thomas Jackson in according him the superiority. This department of Methodist literature has given birth to a number of valuable works on Hymnology. Creamer's is the most comprehensive and thorough. See also Burgess's Wesleyan Hymnology, London, 1845, (an able and critical work.) Roberts's Hymnology, Bristol, 1808. Also articles in Methodist Quarterly Review, May, 1844, (by Rev. Dr. Floy,) and Southern Methodist Quarterly Review, January, 1848; Jackson's

all he had written for the credit of being the author of Charles Wesley's unrivaled hymn entitled "Wrestling Jacob."

Every important doctrine of Holy Scripture, every degree of spiritual experience, almost every shade of religious thought and feeling, and nearly every ordinary relation and incident of human life, are treated in his abundant and ever varying verse. No poet surpasses him in the variety of his themes. Rarely can any man open his volumes without finding something apposite to his own moods or wants.

The whole soul of Charles Wesley was imbued with poetic genius. His thoughts seemed to bask and revel in rhythm. The variety of his meters (said to be unequaled by any English writer whatever) shows how impulsive were his poetic emotions, and how wonderful his facility in their spontaneous and varied utterance. In the Wesleyan Hymn Book alone they amount to at least twenty-six, and others are found in his other productions. They march at times like lengthened processions with solemn grandeur; they sweep at other times like chariots of fire through the heavens; they are broken like the sobs of grief at the grave-side, play like the joyful affections of childhood at the hearth, or shout like victors in the fray of the battle-field. No man ever surpassed Charles Wesley in the harmonies of language. To him it was a diapason.

He never seems to labor in his poetic compositions. The reader feels that they were necessary utterances of a heart palpitating with emotion and music. No words seem to be put in for effect; but effective phrases, brief, surprising, incapable of improvement, are continually and spontaneously occurring, "like lightning," says Montgomery, "revealing for a moment the whole hemisphere." His language is never tumid; the most and the least cultivated minds appreciate him with surprised delight; his metaphors,

Review of Charles Wesley's Poetry, Life of Charles Wesley, chap. 28; Watson's elaborate note, Life of Wesley, chap. 14; and Montgomery's Christian Psalmist, Introduction.

abundant and vivid, are seldom farfetched or strained; his rhymes seldom or never constrained. His style is throughout severely pure.

The biographer of Watts acknowledges "the faulty versification and inelegant construction of some of his hymns, which have been pointed out as their principal defects," but adds, "they would have never occurred had they been written under the same circumstances as those of his Arminian successor."[43] The difference of "circumstances" may account for the fact, but does not cancel it. He contends for the superiority of Watts, but admits the talent of Wesley. "In estimating," he says, "the merits of these two great hymnists—the greatest unquestionably that our country can boast—I should not hesitate to ascribe to the former greater skill in design, to the latter in execution; to the former more originality, to the latter more polish. Many of Wesley's flights are bold, daring, and magnificent." 'Originality" and "skill in design," are among Charles Wesley's most peculiar excellences. A critic, whose theological predilections are all in favor of Watts, remarks: "The opening couplets of his hymns and psalms often give brilliant promises; they seem to be the preludes of faultless lyrics—outbursts of genuine song, which need only to be sustained to be without superiors in uninspired verse. But often they are not sustained. They are followed by stanzas which doom them in every pulpit."[44] The wings of Charles Wesley's muse seldom or never droop in her flight.

Through most of his life the poet of Methodism incessantly surprised its societies by the appearance of new poetical publications. Besides his hymns for Sunday public worship, special "Hymns for the Watch-nights," "Hymns on the Lord's Supper," "Hymns for the Nativity of Our

[43] Milner's Life of Watts. Creamer makes it appear probable that Milner was ignorant of the "far greater mass" of Wesley's hymns. Impartial critics will at least agree that Milner has mistaken the chief traits of Wesley's genius.

[44] Art. "Hymnology," in Bibliotheca Sacra, January, 1859.

Lord," "Hymns for our Lord's Resurrection," "Hymns for the Ascension," "Gloria Patria, or Hymns to the Trinity," "Hymns for Public Thanksgiving," "Hymns occasioned by the Earthquake," in 1750, "Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution," in 1756, "Hymns for the expected Invasion," 1756, "Hymns for Methodist Preachers," in 1758, "Hymns for New Year's Day," "Hymns for the Use of Families," "Hymns for Children," etc., "Funeral Hymns," "Hymns written in the Times of the Tumults," in 1780, "Hymns for the Nation," in 1782, and, last of all his publications, poetic "Prayers for Condemned Malefactors," in 1785—but three years before he ceased at once to sing and live—kept the Methodist community, and the popular mind generally, more or less astir by the rapturous strains of his lyre. Many of them related to contemporaneous events, which could not fail to give them special interest and influence. His funeral hymns, unrivaled by any similar poetry, were sung, as we have seen, along the highways as the dead were borne to their graves. His "Hymns for Families" are admired by some of his critics as the best examples of his genius. They are at least the best exhibition of his own pure and genial heart, as many of their themes were drawn from incidents of his domestic life. They consist of pieces, "For a Woman in Travail," "Thanksgiving for her Safe Delivery," "At the Baptism of a Child," "At sending a Child to Boarding-school," "Thanksgiving after a Recovery from the Small-pox," "Oblation of a Sick Friend," "Prayers for a Sick Child," "A Father's Prayer for his Son," "The Collier's Hymn," "For a Persecuting Husband," "For an Unconverted Wife," "For Unconverted Relations," "For a Family in Want," "To be sung at the Tea-table," "For one retired into the Country," "A Wedding Song." This volume contains also many other hymns for parents and children, masters and servants, for domestic bereavements, for the Sabbath, for sleep, for going to work, for morning and evening.

In the Wesleyan Hymn Book are six hundred and twenty-seven hymns by Charles Wesley; but these are not one tenth of his poetical compositions. About four thousand six hundred have been printed, and about two thousand still remain in manuscript. In the space of twenty-two years he revised his publications eight times; but the almost perfect literary finish of his hymns, as contained in the Wesleyan Collection, is, to no small extent, the effect of his brother's revision. John Wesley was rigorously severe in his criticisms, and appeared to be conscious that the psalmody of Methodism was to be one of its chief providential facts—at once its liturgy and psalter to millions. Throughout his life, therefore, he frequently returned to the task of its laborious revision. He enriched it himself with some fine original contributions, and with about twenty-four translations from the German.[45] He has not only given the latter better versions than they have received from any other hand, but has excelled the originals. The biographer of Watts regrets that no sufficiently able hand has remedied the defects of his style and versification. He would, doubtless, compare better with Charles Wesley in these respects had he possessed so skillful a corrector as the latter found in his brother.[46] The Methodist psalmody was, in fine, the life-long labor of both the Wesleys, and is one of the noblest monuments of the religious movement of the eighteenth century. The spirit of that great evangelical revolution is embodied forever in the poetry of Charles Wesley. Nothing else of human origin, not even the Sermons of John Wesley, more fully expresses

[45] Watson supposed that some if not all of these were translated by Charles Wesley; Jackson attributes them to John; Creamer and Burgess make out good proof that they were all translated by the latter.

[46] Wesley's occasional emendations of Watts are striking examples of his own poetic skill. The grand hymn, "Before Jehovah's awful throne," is an instance.

"Nations attend before his throne
With solemn fear, with sacred joy."—*Watts.*

"Before Jehovah's awful throne
Ye nations bow with sacred joy.—*Wesley.*

the very essence of Methodism. A competent judge has said: "These very hymns, if the writer had not been connected with Methodism, would have shown a very different phase; for while the depth and richness of them are the writer's, the epigrammatic intensity, and the pressure which marks them, belong to Methodism. They may be regarded as the representatives of a modern devotional style which has prevailed quite as much beyond the boundaries of the Wesleyan community as within it. Charles Wesley's hymns on the one hand, and those of Toplady, Cowper, and Newton on the other, mark that great change in religious sentiment which distinguishes the times of Methodism from the staid Nonconforming era of Watts and Dodridge."[47] His hymns are of such pure and idiomatic English that their style can never become obsolete, unless our language shall become thoroughly corrupt; their sentiments are so genuine, not only to Christianity but humanity, that they can never cease to command the response of the common human heart. His services to Methodism in this respect can never be overestimated. More than a quarter of a century since, the Methodist hymns were sold at the rate of sixty thousand volumes annually in England; they have been issued at an immensely larger rate in America. Their triumphant melodies swell farther and farther over the world every year, and their influence, moral and intellectual, is beyond all calculation.

While they have been of inestimable service as exponents of Methodist theology and piety, they have also served to correct that tendency to doggerel verse which is so frequent among the common people in seasons of strong religious excitement. Methodism has had often to resist this tendency; it has been able to do so chiefly by the power of its hymns; they are so varied, so vivid, and so simple, that they hardly leave a motive for the use of any other lyrical compositions. Justly does John Wesley say, in his preface to the "Collection for the the Use of the People called Methodists," that "in

[47] Isaac Taylor, Wesley and Methodism.

these hymns there are no doggerel, no botches, nothing put in to patch up the rhyme, no feeble expletives. Here is nothing turgid or bombastic, on the one hand, or low and creeping on the other. Here are no cant expressions, no words without meaning. Here are (allow me to say) both the purity, the strength, and the elegance of the English language; and, at the same time, the utmost simplicity and plainness, suited to every capacity."

While giving the masses divine songs, Wesley also endeavored to make them sing. He was continually urging his preachers to set the example, and not only exhort the people to follow it, but to induce them to learn the science of music. "Preach frequently on singing," he said, in the Minutes of the Conference; "suit the tune to the words;" "do not suffer the people to sing too slow;" "let the women sing their parts alone; let no man sing with them, unless he understands the notes, and sings the base;" "exhort every one in the congregation to sing; in every large society let them learn to sing; recommend our Tune Book everywhere." As early as 1742 he issued "A Collection of Tunes set to Music, as sung at the Foundry." He published a small work on "The Grounds of Vocal Music." Three other publications followed these, at intervals, on "Sacred Harmony," adapted to "the voice, harpsichord, and organ," for he was not opposed to instrumental music in divine worship; though, for the prevention of disputes in the societies, he directed them to set up "no organ anywhere till proposed in the Conference."[48] It was not long before he could justly boast of the superiority of the Methodist singing over that of the churches of the Establishment: "Their solemn addresses to God," he says, "are not interrupted either by the formal drawl of a parish clerk, the screaming of boys, who bawl out what they neither feel nor understand, or the unseasonable and unmeaning impertinence of a voluntary on the organ. When it is seasonable to sing praise to God, they do it with the spirit and the understand-

[48] Large Minutes, 1789.

ing also; not in the miserable, scandalous doggerel of Sternhold and Hopkins: but in psalms and hymns which are both sense and poetry, such as would sooner provoke a critic to turn Christian, than a Christian to turn critic. What they sing is, therefore, a proper continuation of the spiritual and reasonable service; being selected for that end, not by a poor humdrum wretch, who can scarcely read what he drones out with such an air of importance, but by one who knows what he is about; not by a handful of wild unawakened striplings, but by a whole serious congregation; and these not lolling at ease, or in the indecent posture of sitting, drawling out one word after another; but all standing before God, and praising him lustily, and with a good courage." The Methodist hymn music early took a high form of emotional expression. It could not be otherwise with a community continually stirred by religious excitement; it was also a necessity of the rapturous poetry of Charles Wesley, for tame or common-place tunes would be absurd with it. Handel found in the Methodist Hymns a poetry worthy of his own grand genius, and he set to music those beginning "Sinners, obey the Gospel word!" "O love divine, how sweet thou art!" "Rejoice! the Lord is King."[49]

Next to Charles Wesley's Hymns, John Wesley's Sermons were the chief staple of Methodist literature during the last century. They were continually appearing in cheap editions as tracts, or in costlier forms as volumes. They comprise one hundred and forty-one discourses, consisting of five series. The first series, fifty-three in number, was published in four volumes in 1771, and constitutes, with his Notes on the New Testament, the standard of Methodist theology, as recognized in the Deed of Declaration, and the trust deeds of Wesleyan chapels. The second series comprises fifty-five discourses, which were mostly

[49] Wesleyan Magazine, 1826. This music was published in 1826, from the originals of Handel, found among the musical manuscripts of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University.

first printed in the Arminian Magazine, and were collected and published in four volumes in 1788. The third includes eighteen sermons prepared for the Arminian Magazine, but never revised by Wesley. The fourth consists of seven discourses, published separately, but never inserted by him in any collected edition of his works; they were preached on special occasions, and include, among others, a sermon delivered before the University of Oxford, and his celebrated discourse on Free Grace. In the fifth series are eight sermons which appear never to have been designed by him for publication, but were selected from his papers after his death.

His "Notes on the New Testament" are celebrated for their terseness and laconic pertinence. The text is a new translation, and is remarkable as having anticipated many of the improved readings of later critics.[50] For the comments he was largely indebted to Bengelius. He began this invaluable work on Sunday, January 6, 1754, as the occupation of an interval of sickness during which he was interdicted from preaching by medical authority. The first edition appeared in 1755. All his large societies were directed to provide copies for his preachers. A second edition was issued in 1757, and in 1760–61–62 a third appeared, in three duodecimo volumes, for the convenience of his itinerants, who had to carry them in their saddle-bags, and who were enjoined "frequently to read and enlarge upon a portion" of them in public. In 1788 Wesley issued them again with his final revisions.[51]

[50] Some of them have been adopted by scholars of high character. Hales, Campbell, and Sharpe are much indebted to them. Not a few of Dean Trench's happiest suggestions for a revision of the text were anticipated by Wesley.

[51] "We notice the quarto edition of the Notes on the New Testament as the most elegantly printed book Mr. Wesley ever published, and embellished with one of the best of his early prints that we have seen." Hampson's Life of Wesley, vol. iii, p. 147. This likeness was carved by one of his lay preachers, John Downes, on the top of a stick, and engraved on copper by the same hand. Downes was a genius. See p. 152 of this volume.

His Notes on the Old Testament are now only occasionally found in copies of the first edition. They were spoiled by the printer, and Wesley never had time for the formidable task of revising them. While passing through the press, it was found that the work would be much larger than was intended, and therefore unsalable among the mass of Methodist readers. To avoid this liability the notes were bunglingly abridged by the printer, and the publication failed.[52]

Wesley's Journals are the most entertaining productions of his pen. They are the history of the man and of his cause. They appeared at irregular intervals in twenty parts, and record with singular conciseness, yet with minuteness, his personal life from his departure for Georgia, in 1735, to the autumn before his death, in 1790. They have afforded the most important materials of our pages. Besides their historical value, they are replete with curious incidents, criticisms of books, theological and philosophical speculations, and references to contemporary men and events. For more than half a century they keep us not only weekly, but almost daily in the company of the great man, in his travels, his studies, and his public labors.

His miscellaneous works were surprisingly numerous, and, addressed, as many of them were, to some public question or current interest, they must have had a powerful influence on the multitudes of his people. Some of them, like his "Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion," chiefly in defense of the Methodistic movement, and his treatise on "Original Sin," in answer to Dr. Taylor of Norwich, are elaborate productions. He prepared a History of England, and a History of the Church, each in four volumes, and a Compendium of Natural Philosophy, in five. He was not content to conduct his school at Kingswood according to the usual plans of education; he made it the scene of continual experimental improvements in methods of instruction as well as of discipline. In the latter he did not succeed; but in the former he antici-

[52] Adam Clarke's Commentary, General Preface.

pated important reforms, which were afterward completed by Bell, and which have emancipated academic studies from intolerable burdens and absurdities. He prepared, for his school, text-books remarkable for their simplicity and conciseness—English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French grammars, compendiums of Logic and Rhetoric, an English Dictionary, a History of Rome, expurgated editions of classic authors, selections from Corderius and Erasmus, and other works.

One of his most important schemes for the promotion of religious knowledge was his "Christian Library." He wished to meet by it a want of his preachers, but it was designed also for the people, and depended upon them for its support. It began in 1749, and continued through fifty volumes till 1755, at a loss of more than £200. It consisted of abridgments of the choicest works of practical divinity, beginning with translations of the Apostolic Fathers. The entire work was reprinted in 1825, in thirty octavo volumes.

A Methodist authority remarks that the cheap and useful literature of subsequent times has been an imitation, designedly or not, of this extraordinary literary scheme of Wesley.[53] "Modern compilers," he justly adds, "have few difficulties to surmount. They can readily avail themselves of the improvements of science, and of that appetite for knowledge which is excited by the labors of the 'schoolmaster.' Wesley had to create that appetite, and he had to create it in a people deeply sunk in ignorance, and addicted to brutal habits. His 'Christian Library' was a noble effort to render available, to the spiritual interests of the people in general, the scarce and valuable works of voluminous and learned authors."

So extensive did these publishing enterprises quickly become, that Wesley soon had his "own Bookstore," and his "own Printing House."[54] These were not only the begin-

[53] Jackson's Preface to Wesley's Works, p. 15.
[54] Burkhard's Vollstandige Geschichte, chap. 5

ning of the modern Methodist "Book Concerns," but they were the first "Tract House;" for from his press, and his sales-room at the Foundry, as well as from other sources, were issued the publications with which the Tract Society, instituted in 1782, was supplied, and which were scattered by his preachers and people over the United Kingdom like the leaves of autumn. "Two and forty years ago," he writes, "having a desire to furnish poor people with cheaper, shorter, and plainer books than any I had seen, I wrote many small tracts, generally a penny apiece; and afterward sev eral larger. Some of these had such a sale as I never thought of; and by this means I unawares became rich." But his riches were all invested in his publishing house, or other schemes of popular usefulness, and he died, as he had promised, not leaving, apart from such public property, more than ten pounds for his funeral expenses.

Not content with books and tracts, Wesley projected, in August, 1777, the Arminian Magazine, and issued the first number at the beginning of 1778. It was one of the first four religious magazines which sprung from the resuscitated religion of the age, and which began this species of periodical publications in the Protestant world.[55] Though nominally devoted to the defense of the Arminian theology, it was miscellaneous in its contents, and served not only for the promotion of religious literature, but of general intelligence. He conducted it till his death, and made faithful use of it for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. It is now the oldest religious periodical in the world. Its importance to the history of his cause is inestimable; that history never could have been written had not Wesley published this repertory of its early biographies and correspondence. Each number contained a portrait of one of his preachers, or clerical co-laborers, and its eighty volumes form a portrait gallery illustrative of the whole history of Methodism.

Such were some of Wesley's labors through the press for the elevation of the common people. He was the first to

[55] Southey's Wesley, chap. 26.

break down the barriers which high prices and elaborate style had thrown around the more important departments of knowledge, barring the masses from them. It has justly been said that he reduced many folios and quartos to pocket volumes;[56] he waded through the mass of the learned works of his day, and, simplifying, multiplying, cheapening them, presented in the cottages and hovels of the poor almost every variety of useful or entertaining knowledge.[57] In addition to his own prose productions, constituting fourteen octavo volumes in the English edition and seven in the American, his "Notes" and abridgments make a catalogue of one hundred and eighteen prose works, (a single one of which, The Christian Library, contains fifty volumes,) forty-nine poetical publications by himself and his brother, and five distinct works on music. It may be questioned whether any English writer of the last or the present century has equaled him in the number of his productions.

Such a use of the press in our day, by a single man, and he a hard-working clergyman, would be remarkable; in Wesley's day it was marvelous. It could not fail to be one of the greatest moral powers of his age. Nearly all his other labors promoted its influence among the people; his name on a book secured it attention among thousands; his daily travels and sermons attracted the popular mind with interest to his publications, and his preachers were active agents for their circulation in almost all parts of the kingdom, the United States, and the British American provinces. It was impossible that the mighty energies of the press could be thus put forth for more than half a century, among a population however depressed, without visible effect. Accordingly the change, the revolution, it may be called, in the popular intelligence and literature, and in the general in-

[56] Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i, p. 701.

[57] He even reproduced a novel for them, "Henry, Earl of Moreland," abridged from "The Fool of Quality," which Mr. Kingsley has thought worth editing in our times.

tellectual condition of the English race, which began in the last century, and is still rapidly advancing, will be found to have been coincident with these extraordinary labors. How far the one is attributable to the other, Methodist writers need not be anxious to determine; but it is due to historical fidelity that they should point to the facts, and leave the world to judge of their relation as cause and effect.

The intellectual depression of the English masses in the early days of Wesley was a necessary consequence of their moral degradation, so abundantly proved in these pages. The biographer of Wesley whom the literary world has most readily accepted as authority, has given the deplorable evidence as decisively as any other writer.[58] He has acknowledged that "there never was less religious feeling either within the Establishment or without, than when Wesley blew his trumpet, and awakened those who slept."[59] The moral awakening which ensued could not possibly have continued, as it did during more than half a century under Wesley's own labors, without an intellectual awakening also. The Establishment, with its learning, its opulence, and dignity, stooped to do little toward either; and the learned Priestley, a high authority respecting the one, if not the other, indignantly rebuked the Church, and commended Methodism as not only "Christianizing," but "civilizing that part of the community which is below the notice of your dignified clergy."[60] A literary authority has said: "It is in the rural districts into which manufactories have spread—that are partly manufacturing and partly agricultural—that the population assumes its worst shape. The Methodists have done much to check the progress of demoralization in these districts. They have given vast numbers education; they have taken them away from the pot-house and the gambling-house; from low haunts and low pursuits. They have placed them in a cer-

[58] Robert Southey, Life of Wesley, chap. 9.
[59] See his Prospects and Progress of Society, vol. ii, p. 54.
[60] Priestley's Letter to Burke, p. 89.

tain circle, and invested them with a degree of moral and social importance. They have placed them where they have a character to sustain, and higher objects to strive after; where they have ceased to be operated upon by a perpetual series of evil influences, and have been brought under the regular operation of good ones. They have rescued them from brutality of mind and manners, and given them a more refined association on earth, and a warm hope of a still better existence hereafter. If they have not done all that could be desired, with such materials, they have done much, and the country owes them much." [61]

A traveler, half a century ago, describing with grateful surprise the moral revolution which had taken place in the West of England, asks: "Who have been the immediate instruments of so much good in a district so unlikely to exhibit such gratifying appearances? I feel I am but doing justice to a class of people much, though undeservedly, cal umniated, when I answer, The Wesleyan Methodists. With a zeal that ought to put to the blush men of higher pretensions, those indefatigable servants of their Master have penetrated into the wilds of the mines, and unappalled by danger or difficulty, careless of abuse or derision, and inflexible in the good work they had undertaken, they have perseveringly taught, gradually reclaimed, and at length, I may almost venture to say, completely reformed a large body of men, who, without their exertions, would probably still have been immersed in the deepest spiritual darkness, and grossest moral turpitude." [62]

No other nation, perhaps, has ever exhibited such a simultaneous moral and intellectual awakening as the English people passed through during the extraordinary religious and literary labors of Methodism in the eighteenth century.

A deistical authority assures us, though attributing the fact to a false cause, that "meantime an immense change

[61] Howitt's Rural Life of England, p. 183.

[62] A Tour through Cornwall, etc., in 1808, by Rev. Richard Warner, of Bath, pp. 301, 302.

had begun, not only among speculative minds, but also among the people themselves;" and that "one of the leading characteristics of the eighteenth century, and one that pre-eminently distinguishes it from all that preceded, was a craving after knowledge on the part of those classes from whom knowledge had hitherto been shut out."[63] It was then that Sunday schools arose to supply in part this craving, and no man promoted them more than Wesley.[64] The spread of books created an appetite for them which the wages of the people could not supply, and circulating libraries sprang up. Franklin found not one of these convenient provisions in London in 1725.[65] Southey says that the first in the metropolis was begun about the middle of the century.[66] The first in Birmingham was opened in 1751;[67] but so fast did they multiply, that before long they attracted the attention of politicians as desirable sources of revenue by taxation. The printing-press, hitherto almost confined to the metropolis, began to appear in the country towns. As late as 1714 there were no printers in Chester, Whitehaven, Preston, Kendall, Leeds, Manchester, or Liverpool.[68] In 1749 we hear of a printer in Birmingham, but in the reign of Anne there was not one there.[69] In 1780 there was "scarcely a bookseller" in all Cornwall;[70] Wesley's publications were among the first to rouse the intellect of the common people of that county. The first press in Whitby was set up in 1770. Before Wesley died the printing-press was doing its enlightening work in most of the important places of the kingdom. In the eighteenth cen-

[63] Buckle's History of Civilization, vol. i, chap. 7.

[64] Contemporary authorities show that the national clergy were generally opposed to Sunday schools. Compare Spencer's Social Statics, p. 343, with Watson's Observations on Southey, p. 149.

[65] Life of himself, vol. i, p. 64.

[66] The Doctor, p. 271.

[67] Hutton's life of himself, p. 279.

[68] Life of Gent, the Printer, by himself, p. 20. See also Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, vol. i, p. 289.

[69] Southey's Common-Place Book, First Series, p. 568.

[70] Life of Samuel Drew.

tury were also made the first systematic efforts to popularize the sciences by the publication of treatises upon them in a simple and untechnical style,[71] and Wesley shared in the task by his Compendium of Natural Philosophy[72] and other works. The people began to unite in societies for the purchase of books, and before the end of the century reading clubs began to appear among them. It has been ascertained that "the marked increase" in the number and variety of books occurred during the last half of the century, especially from 1756; and that from 1753 to 1792 the newspapers of the country more than doubled their circulation.[73] "In every department the same eager curiosity was shown."[74] The impulse given to the popular mind bore it onward in a manner unknown before; the people roused themselves for a new career. Debating societies were formed among them in the middle of the century; loftier designs were soon exhibited, and in 1769 Englishmen met publicly, for the first time in their history, to enlighten one another respecting their political rights.[75] In fine, the trumpets of a grand moral and intellectual resurrection had sounded through the realm; the masses were rising from the dead; and who, during this century, had uttered to them more awakening blasts than George Whitefield, John Wesley, and their hundreds of heroic evangelists? Above all, it was in this uprising of the popular intellect that the responsibility of the people for religious questions and interests became a matter of general consciousness—a fact which has since been revolutionizing the Protestant world, and to which the example of Wesley's societies, and especially of his lay ministry, could not fail to

[71] Buckle's History of Civilization, vol. i, chap. 7.

[72] It was in five volumes, 12mo., and reached a fourth edition in 1784.

[73] Buckle, chap. 7, and Hunt's History of Newspapers, vol. i, p. 252.

[74] Buckle, chap. 7.

[75] Ibid. "Public meetings . . . through which the people declare their newly acquired consciousness of power. . . . cannot be distinctly traced higher than the year 1769, but they were now (1770) of daily occurrence." Cook's History of Party, vol. iii, p. 187.

contribute. A high living authority testifies that, "neither the attacks on our religion, nor the evidences in its support, were to any great extent brought forward in a popular form till near the close of the last century. On both sides, the learned (or those who professed to be such) seem to have agreed in this—that the mass of the people were to acquiesce in the decision of their superiors, and neither should nor could exercise their own minds on the question." [76]

It is admitted also, that with these extraordinary popular changes, the condition of literary men was revolutionized. A vast popular market was opened for them. They ceased to be dependent upon rich or titled patronage. Their old obsequious Dedication passed away.[77] They assumed a more popular style, and became more genuine, both as men and as authors, by the change. They were also morally emancipated; dependence upon the powerful or rich few, with its natural tendencies to servility, to prejudice against the popular interests, and in favor of the vices of the great, gave way to independence, to an appeal to the millions; and the millions have not failed to respond, and to give to genius a recognition and a patronage which has rendered authorship a power supreme over senates and thrones.

Such are some of the coincident facts of the Methodistic, and of the intellectual and social history of England in the last century.

The great man who was despised by priests and caricatured by prelates,[78] while he was doing more than all of them for the redemption of their Church; who was satirized by authors, while helping so effectually to break open a way for them from the slavery of aristocratic patronage to the

[76] Archbishop Whateley's Dangers to Christian Faith, pp. 76, 77.

[77] "About the middle of the eighteenth century was the turning point of this deplorable condition; and Watson, for instance, in 1769, laid it down as a rule, 'never to dedicate to those from whom I expected favors.' So, too, Warburton, in 1758, boasts, 'that his dedication was not, as usual, occupied by trifles and falsehoods.'" Buckle, chap. 7.

[78] See the instances of Warburton and Lavington, vol. i, pp. 306, 420.

sympathies and patronage of the awakened people; who was assailed by mobs, while laboring and sacrificing himself, as no other man of modern ages has done, for the welfare of themselves and their children—John Wesley thus lived and labored, the truest and most manifest man of England, during the whole of these great changes, and the history which ignores his agency in them will, if not in this generation, yet in another, be pronounced a literary imposture, an historical lie, by the general voice of humanity.[79]

The attempt of skeptical or philosophical writers to trace these grand improvements to purely social, or accidental causes, cannot stand the test of historical examination. Christianity claims them, as she does most of the beneficial changes of modern civilization. The cross stands out aloft and radiant amid the receding clouds, and the world beholds beneath it the thousands of reclaimed poor, gazing at it with care-worn, but upturned brows, and pointing to it with labor-worn, but uplifted hands, as the emblem of all human hope for both worlds.

And the philosophic eye, touched with the divine light of the vision, may read still upon the never-failing symbol the ancient inscription, *In hoc signo vinces*—Under this sign shalt thou conquer!

Such is the ultimate lesson with which the curtain falls upon this second act in the extraordinary drama of the Religious Movement of the eighteenth century, called Methodism.

[79] Macaulay expresses contempt for "some writers of books called Histories of England under the reign of George II., in which the rise of Methodism is not mentioned," and says that in a hundred years "such a breed of authors will be extinct." Lord Russell (Mems. of Affairs of Europe from the Peace of Utrecht) and Lord Mahon (Hist. of England, vol. ii) have given considerable attention to the subject, but their eulogies are characterized by the usual invidiousness of Churchmen. Methodists may expect from Lord Macaulay more impartiality.

APPENDIX.

SOUTHEY'S LETTER ON WESLEY.

KESWICK, 17 *Aug.*, 1835.

DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged to you for your letter, and for your kind offer to lend me such books as may render my Life of Wesley less incomplete. The edition of his Works (1809–13) in seventeen volumes (that one containing only the Index included) I have. I will therefore only trouble you for those volumes of the new edition that contains Mr. Benson's life, and the additional letters, and also for Beal's Early History of the Wesleys, which I had never before heard of. Adam Clarke's Memoirs of the Family I have, and mean to make use of it. Indeed, if you tell me, when you have inspected his additional matter, that his second volume will, in your opinion, be worth waiting for, I shall much rather wait for it than lose the opportunity of making my new edition as correct as I can. My intention is to incorporate in it whatever new information has been brought forward by subsequent biographers, and, of course, to correct every error that has been pointed out, or that I myself can discover. Mr. Alexander Knox has convinced me that I was mistaken in supposing ambition entered largely into Mr. Wesley's actuating impulses. Upon the subject he wrote a long and most admirable paper, and gave me permission to affix it to my own work whenever it might be reprinted. This I shall do, and make such alterations in the book as are required in consequence. The Wesleyan leaders never committed a greater mistake than when they treated me as an enemy. . . . I shall be greatly obliged to you for any documents with which you can supply me. I have some interesting matter (direct and collateral) to add, nothing, I think, material to alter, except on the one point upon which I had judged injuriously of Mr. Wesley. But my work will not be the more palatable on this account to those who have declared war against it. Farewell, dear sir, and believe me, with many thanks and with sincere respect, Yours very truly, ROBERT SOUTHEY.

To JAMES NICHOLS, Esq., 46 Hoxton Square.

JOHN WESLEY AND GRACE MURRAY.

The person on whom Mr. Wesley's affections were placed was in every respect worthy of them. From documents now before me, I am enabled to give a short account of this very interesting attachment and of its failure, so very painful to Mr. Wesley.

Miss Grace Norman, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, was married at a very early age to Mr. Alexander Murray, of a respectable family in Scotland.

He was an affectionate husband, and his kind attentions were repaid by the affectionate attachment of his wife; but they were both at that time totally insensible to the happiness of religion, Mrs. Murray having departed from the God of her early youth. After some time she was awakened by the powerful preaching of that day, and immediately began to fulfill her baptismal vow. She renounced the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, in which they had both delighted, and became the devoted servant of the Lord that bought her. This change gave her husband great pain, and for some time she suffered a degree of real persecution from him. He even threatened to confine her in a madhouse. Her gentle and affectionate behavior in some measure overcame this evil; but his death at sea, which happened not long after, almost overwhelmed her. She was, however, strengthened by divine grace to submit to this afflictive bereavement, and it was sanctified, in a remarkable manner, to her *furtherance and growth in grace.*

After the death of her husband Mrs. Murray returned to Newcastle; and when Mr. Wesley formed a family connected with his chapel in that town, he appointed her to be the housekeeper. Mr. Wesley had three houses which he accounted his own, one at London, another at Bristol, and a third at Newcastle; to all others he had only the power to appoint the preachers. These houses might be called *Religious Houses;* the housekeepers were persons eminent for piety. The itinerant preachers in the western, northern, and middle counties occasionally visited these establishments, and rested for a short space from their great labor.

Mrs. Murray had now full employment in that way in which she delighted. In the town and in the country societies her labors of love, especially among the females, were remarkably owned of the Lord and highly edifying. Mr. Wesley then enlarged her sphere, and she traveled through the northern counties to meet and regulate the female classes. She then, under his direction, visited Ireland, where she abounded in the same work of faith and love for several months; and though she never attempted to preach, her gifts were much honored, and her "*name as ointment poured forth.*" She retured by Bristol, and visited the societies in the southern and eastern counties, and rested again at Newcastle.

Mr. Wesley, who knew all her proceedings and greatly esteemed her labors, thought he had found a helpmeet for him. But while he indulged these pleasing prospects, in which he was encouraged by his highly valued friend, the Vicar of Shorcham, and others, they were dashed to pieces by the intelligence of Mrs. Murray's marriage, on the third day of October, 1749, at Newcastle, to Mr. John Bennet, one of the itinerant preachers, in the presence of Mr. C. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield:

A son, the fruit of this marriage, and who became a Dissenting minister, published a short memoir of his pious mother after her death, in which he informs his readers that his father, when on a visit to the house at Newcastle, was seized with a violent fever; and that, when all his friends despaired of his life, he was, as he always declared, given back to them in answer to the prayers of Mrs. Murray. From that period he thought, as his son informs us, that "she was given to him for a wife, although he did not declare this for a long time after."

I cannot at this distance of time fully state the causes of this strange interference, especially as, contrary to his usual freedom, I do not re-

member ever to have heard Mr. Wesley mention the event. The high character of those concerned, forbids the imputation of any corrupt motive.

The disappointment was a most severe one to Mr. Wesley, and perhaps the forgiveness and love which he manifested on that occasion, was the highest proof of the power of the religion he possessed that he was ever called to exercise toward man. He continued to employ Mr. Bennet as before, and behaved to him with his usual kindness. That gentleman, however, became still more intimate with Mr. Whitefield, adopted his sentiments, and at length publicly separated from Mr. Wesley at Bolton, in Lancashire, on April 3d, 1752. He afterward settled, as a Dissenting minister, at Warburton, in Cheshire, where he died on the 24th of May, 1759.

There is now lying before me a copy of verses by Mr. Wesley, never yet published, which will fully warrant all I have said concerning this painful event. He seems to have written to ease his bleeding heart. The public life which his high calling obliged him to adopt, caused him generally to restrain the feelings of one of the kindest hearts that ever man was blessed with. But in these verses we see that warm and tender nature breathe itself forth without restraint, except from submission to God; a point of religion which he ever inculcated as the highest fruit of grace.

REFLECTIONS UPON PAST PROVIDENCES.

OCTOBER, 1749.

O Lord, I bow my sinful head!
Righteous are all thy ways with man;
Yet suffer me with thee to plead,
With lowly rev'rence to complain;
With deep, unutter'd grief to groan,
"O what is this that thou hast done?"

Oft, as through giddy youth I roved,
And danced along the flow'ry way,
By chance or thoughtless passion moved,
An easy, unresisting prey
I fell, while love's envenom'd dart
Thrill'd through my nerves and tore my heart.

At length, by sad experience taught,
Firm I shook off the abject yoke;
Abhorr'd his sweetly-pois'nous draught,
Through all his wily fetters broke;
Fix'd my desires on things above,
And languish'd for celestial love!

Borne on the wings of sacred hope,
Long had I soar'd, and spurn'd the ground,
When, panting from the mountain-top,
My soul a kindred spirit found,
By Heaven entrusted to my care,
The daughter of my faith and prayer.

In early dawn of life, serene,
Mild, sweet, and tender was her mood!
Her pleasing form spoke all within
Soft and compassionately good;
List'ning to every wretch's care,
Mingling with each her friendly tear.

In dawn of life, to feed the poor,
Glad she her little all bestow'd;
Wise to lay up a better store,
And hast'ning to be rich in God;
God whom she sought with early care,
With reverence, and with lowly fear.

Ere twice four years pass'd o'er her head,
Her infant mind with love he fill'd;
His gracious, glorious name reveal'd,
And sweetly forced her heart to yield;
She groan'd t' ascend Heaven's high abode,
To die into the arms of God!

Yet, warm with youth and beauty's pride,
Soon was her heedless soul betray'd;
From heaven her footsteps turn'd aside,
O'er pleasure's flow'ry plain she stray'd,
Fondly the toys of earth she sought,
And God was not in all her thought.

Not long—a messenger she saw,
Sent forth glad tidings to proclaim;
She heard, with joy and wond'ring awe,
His cry, "Sinners, behold the Lamb!"
His eye her inmost nature shook,
His word her heart in pieces broke.

Her bosom heaved with lab'ring sighs,
And groan'd th' unutterable prayer;
As rivers from her streaming eyes,
Fast flow'd the never-ceasing tear,
Till Jesus spake—"Thy mourning's o'er,
Believe, rejoice, and weep no more!"

She heard; pure love her soul o'erflow'd;
Sorrow and sighing fled away;
With sacred zeal her spirit glow'd,
Panting His every word t' obey;
Her faith by plenteous fruit she show'd,
And all her works were wrought in God.

Nor works alone her faith approved;
Soon in affliction's furnace tried,
By him whom next to Heaven she loved,
As silver seven times purified,
Shone midst the flames her constant mind,
Emerged, and left the dross behind.

When death, in freshest strength of years,
Her much-loved friend tore from her breast,
Awhile she pour'd her plaints and tears,
But, quickly turning to her rest,
"Thy will be done!" she meekly cried,
"Suffice, for me the Saviour died!"

When first I view'd, with fix'd regard,
Her artless tears in silence flow,
"For thee are better things prepared,"
I said, "Go forth, with Jesus go!
My Master's peace be on thy soul,
Till perfect love shall make thee whole!"

I saw her run, with wingèd speed,
In works of faith and lab'ring love;
I saw her glorious toil succeed,
And showers of blessings from above
Crowning her warm effectual prayer,
And glorified my God in her.

Yet while to all her tender mind
In streams of pure affection flow'd,
To one by ties peculiar join'd,
One, only less beloved than God,
"Myself," she said, "my soul I owe,—
My guardian angel here below!"

From heaven the grateful ardor came,
Pure from the dross of low desire;
Well-pleased I mark'd the guiltless flame,
Nor dared to damp the sacred fire,
Heaven's choicest gift on man bestow'd,
Strength'ning our hearts and hands in God.

'Twas now I bow'd my aching head,
While sickness shook the house of clay;
Duteous she ran with humble speed,
Love's tend'rest offices to pay;
To ease my pain, to soothe my care,
T' uphold my feeble hands in prayer.

Amazed I cried, "Surely for me
A help prepared of Heaven thou art!
Thankful I take the gift from thee,
O Lord! and nought on earth shall part
The souls that thou hast joined above,
In lasting bonds of sacred love."

Abash'd she spoke: "O what is this?
Far above all my boldest hope!
Can God, beyond my utmost wish,
Thus lift his worthless handmaid up?
This only could my soul desire!
This only had I dared require!"

From that glad hour, with growing love,
Heaven's latest, dearest gift I view'd;
While, pleased each moment to improve,
We urged our way with strength renew'd,
Our one desire, our common aim,
T' extol our gracious Master's name.

Companions now in weal and wo,
No power on earth could us divide;
Nor summer's heat nor winter's snow
Could tear my partner from my side;
Nor toils, nor weariness, nor pain,
Nor horrors of the angry main.

Oft, (though as yet the nuptial tie
Was not,) clasping her hand in mine,
"What force," she said, "beneath the sky,
Can now our well-knit souls disjoin?
With thee I'd go to India's coast,
To worlds in distant oceans lost!"

Such was the friend, than life more dear,
Whom in one luckless, baleful hour,
(Forever mention'd with a tear!)
The tempter's unresisted power
(O the unutterable smart!)
Tore from my inly-bleeding heart!

Unsearchable thy judgments are,
O Lord! a bottomless abyss!
Yet sure thy love, thy guardian care,
O'er all thy works extended is!
O why didst thou the blessing send!
Or why thus snatch away my friend!

What thou hast done I know not now;
Suffice, I shall hereafter know!
Beneath thy chast'ning hand I bow;
That still I live to thee I owe.
O teach thy deeply humbled son,
Father! to say, "Thy will be done!"

Teach me from every pleasing snare
To keep the issues of my heart;
Be thou my love, my joy, my fear!
Thou my eternal portion art!
Be thou my never-failing friend,
And love, O love me to the end!

In the year 1788, the son of Mr. Bennet, already mentioned, officiated at a chapel on the Pavement in Moorfields, and his mother came to London in that year on a visit to him. Mr. Thomas Olivers, having seen her, mentioned the circumstance to Mr. Wesley when I was with him, and intimated that Mrs. Bennet wished to see him. Mr. Wesley, with evident feeling, resolved to visit her; and the next morning he took me with him to Colebrook Row, where her son then resided. The meeting was affecting; but Mr. Wesley preserved more than his usual self-possession. It was easy to see, notwithstanding the many years which had intervened, that both in sweetness of spirit, and in person and manners, she was a fit subject for the tender regrets expressed in those verses which I have presented to the reader. The interview did not continue long, and I do not remember that I ever heard Mr. Wesley mention her name afterward.

Some years after the death of her husband, Mrs. Bennet removed to Chapel-en-le-Frith, where she again joined the Methodist society, and, according to her first faith and practice, she abounded in those works of piety and mercy which distinguished her early days. She lived twelve years after the death of Mr. Wesley, and entered into the joy of her Lord, February the 23d, 1803, in the eighty-fifth year of her age.—*Moore's Life of Wesley*, book vi, chap. 3.

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